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WAS CZECHO-SLOVAKIA A DEMOCRACY?

Dr. Arvéd Grébert

The world at large has become accustomed to regarding the first Czecho-Slovak Republic as an exemplary democratic state, a real "isle of democracy" in Central Europe. From the beginning of this state in 1918, official Czech propaganda expended large sums of money to convince the world public that such actually was the case. On the other hand, however, about a half of the total population of Czecho-Slovakia (The Slovaks, Germans, Poles, Magyars, Ruthenians) continually protested this erroneous view and judgement of conditions in the Republic, but little came of it.

In view of what has happened in Czecho-Slovakia since 1938 — the ease with which it collapsed in 1939 and later, in 1945, accepted the hegemony of communistic Moscow, it may be interesting to look a bit closer at the kind of democracy the first Czecho-Slovak Republic actually was.

The Right of Self-Determination and Czecho-Slovakia

T. G. Masaryk and Edward Beneš set about to break up the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy during World War I in the name of and with the aid of the right of self-determination of nations. They evoked this basic principle consistently and constantly. This is attested to by the literature they propagated, as well as the "Memoirs" they placed before the Peace Conference, wherein they claimed the right of self-determination of nations in the interests of Czech independence.

As soon as the war ended, however, and Austria-Hungary lay in ashes, Masaryk and Beneš very quickly and conveniently forgot about the democratic principle of the right of self-determination of nations and labored to create a state which in substance became only a small and bad copy of the old monarchy they had helped to destroy. This newly created and artificial state, which never existed before that time, was first called by the Czechs under Masaryk and Beneš "Czecho-Slovakia" — a synthetic name

unknown in the history of either the Czech nation or the Slovak nation before World War . At the very outset, this synthetic State robbed approximately 4,500,000 (3,700,000 Germans, 800,000 Magyars and about 100,000 Poles) of their basic democratic right, the right of self-determination. The Germans, Magyars and Poles were forced within the framework of this artificial State against their expressed will. And three million Slovaks and about a half million Sub-Carpathian Ukrainians (the Ruthenians) favored the State only conditionally, that is, only if they enjoyed full autonomy within the Republic; when this condition remained unfulfilled they found themselves in opposition to the existence of this State. A political state is supposed to be the expression of the free will of the people the existence of a state is supposed to be in accord with the will of its inhabitants. But Czecho-Slovakia was not such a state; the Prague government, once it was set up in power, repudiated the basic democratic principle of the right of self-determination of nations — the very principle which brought it into being.

We must not forget that the occupation of non-Czech lands took place with weapons in hand against the will of the native population. Manifestations for the realization of the right of self-determination were bloodily suppressed by the Czech army. For example, in a single day, on March 4, 1919, the Czech army killed 57 Germans and wounded over 100 more, when they demonstrated in German towns for their right to self-determination. Up to 1921 there were 130 Germans killed during street demonstrations by the Czech occupation forces. The same situation prevailed in territories inhabited by the Magyars and Poles.

According to 1923 statistics, the newly created Czecho-Slovakia was inhabited by some 6,400,000 Czechs and about 7,000,000 non-Czechs. The latter felt that they were robbed of their democratic right to self-determination, when Masaryk and Beneš repudiated the promises and agreements made by them when the Republic was in a state of formation. This was all the more grave and momentous, since the principle of the right of self-determination was applied

practically in the case of Estonia (1,200,000 pop.), Lithuania (2,500,000), Latvia (2,000,000) Finland (3,800,000), Albania (1,000,000), Norway (3,000,000), Iceland (110,000), Denmark (3,800,000), etc. — states of which the entire population numbered less or approximately the same as, for example, there were Slovaks or Germans in the Czecho-Slovak Republic.

So that we might have some idea of the extent of these realities, we must recall that at that very same time when Czecho-Slovakia originated, there originated three small independent states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) in a far more threatened territory, on the borders of the USSR (160,000,000), without the protection of natural borders or synthetic fortifications; each one of these states had less inhabitants than Czecho-Slovakia had Slovaks or Germans who were robbed of their right to self-determination. And on the borders of the Soviet colossus there originated Finland, which at that time had only about 4,000,000 inhabitants and, therefore, much less than the non-Czech nationalities of Czecho-Slovakia who were deprived of their right to self-determination.

In the case of the Albanians, who inhabit the dangerous Balkan crossroads of the interests of Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia, their right to state independence was recognized and respected. But the Sudeten Germans were not permitted to join either Austria or Germany in 1919, as they had desired to do. And the will of the Slovak nation (3,000,000) was not respected when it decided to join the Czechs in a common state only on condition that it would enjoy full autonomy within the framework of the Republic. Once in power, the government of Masaryk and Beneš also refused to respect the rights of the Ruthenians and the Polish and Magyar minorities. From this standpoint, "Czecho-Slovak" democracy for the 7,000,000 inhabitants of that State was only an empty phrase, a propaganda term devoid of content and foundation.

A Dictated Constitution

The foundations of the political structure of every state are represented by its constitution. The basic prin-

ciple of every genuine democratic state is that its constitution is the expression of the will of its inhabitants. It is quite obvious to assume, where a multinational state is concerned, that all strata of the population, all regions of the state, and all nationalities are properly and duly represented when the constitution is created. In Czecho-Slovakia, however, the Constitution of February 29, 1920, was exclusively a Czech product, and the Czechs under Masaryk and Beneš simply dictated it and forced it upon the majority of the non-Czech population of the State

In the so-called Constitutional National Assembly there was not a single representative of the 3,700,000 Germans, not a single representative of the 800,000 Magyars, and not a single representative of the 100,000 Poles. And the representatives of the Slovak nation were not elected by the people, but simply appointed by Prague, and this was done in such a way that would best satisfy Prague: the overwhelming majority of them were proponents of "Czecho-slovakism" — the opponents of Slovak autonomy — even though the vast majority of Slovaks were proponents of Slovak autonomy within the framework of the Czecho-Slovak Republic. The representatives of Czech imperialism and "progressiveness" went so far as to name Czechs as representatives of Slovakia, as, for example, Dr. Edward Beneš, Dr. Alice Masaryk, Ing. Joseph Rotnágl, Dr. Aloysius Kolísek, and Ing. Joseph Záruba-Pfeffermann. When Czecho-Slovakia was born not more than 5000 Czechs lived in Slovakia, hence these Czechs could hardly be considered as representatives of their people in Slovakia.

In the twentieth century, when the solution or the granting of self-management or independence to some colonial nation of Africa or Asia is debated and negotiated, it is customary that representatives of the native population speak in their name. But the Czech imperialists under Masaryk and Beneš thought otherwise. They probably regarded the Slovaks as a nation beneath the level of colonial nations, because they named also five Czechs to represent it on the Constitutional National Assembly — Czechs who were practically unknown to the vast majority of the Slovak

people. For example, up to that time, Dr. Edward Beneš had never been in Slovakia. In this handpicked "parliament" there were 204 Czech, but only 56 Slovak deputies, and this number included five Czechs mentioned above. Furthermore, there were only eight Slovak deputies from the autonomist bloc in that appointed Constitutional National Assembly. And it was significant, indeed, that on the very day that the Prague parliament voted for this Constitution, the leader of the Slovak nation and undoubtedly the most eminent political figure of the Slovak struggle against Magyarism, Andrew Hlinka, was behind bars in a Czech prison.

The Slovak representation in that assembly was so unjust that even such a notorious adherent of "Czechoslovakism" as Dr. Juraj Slávik — now a member of the so-called "Council of Free Czechoslovakia" which operates out of New York and Washington — protested at that time that the Slovaks did not have sufficient and proper representation. The Czechs replied that an adjustment would be made, but nothing happened. Because Mr. Slávik did not continue protesting against the injustice, Prague rewarded him for it. In a very short time he became a minister in the Czech government in Prague. Even Seton-Watson, a close and loyal friend of T. G. Masaryk, noted that Slovak seats in the legislative assembly were to a certain extent filled by arbitrary appointments (Slovakia Then And Now" — pg. 12).

Under such undemocratic conditions the Constitution that emerged enthroned a regime of Czech hegemony in the Czecho-Slovak State. The entire Czecho-Slovak political system rested on this Constitution which is dictated by the Czechs. And since the Constitution was dictated, therefore dictated was also the entire system in its relationship to the 7,000,000 non-Czech citizens. Where a state is forced on a half of its population, where a Constitution is dictated to half the population and against its most elementary political, economic and cultural interests, where 7,000,000 people are overruled and made a minority of, there can be no serious talk about a democratic state. In Czecho-Slovakia the

Czechs sought to realize the very thing they had fought against so furiously in Austria. And realize it they did, even if eventually it did mean the utter ruin of the State they had created under Masaryk and Beneš.

Centralism vs. Federalism

The dictated Czech Constitution installed a rugged centralistic system in Czecho-Slovakia; practically all key political positions and all power rested in Czech hands. Among the fundamental principles of democratic states belongs the principle that multinational or multilingual states should be organized on a federalistic basis, that is, with the aid of autonomy of the individual minorities, since it is only in this manner that the principles of justice in a mutual relationship of the individual nationalities of the state can be realized in practice. But the great "Czechoslovak Democrats" repudiated this principle and instituted a strong centralistic regime. By so doing they not only failed to keep the promises made and given the Slovaks and Ruthenians and the minorities, but also instituted a regime which was in substance a profanation and mockery of democracy. Behind the mask of democratic phrases they installed a regime of Czech national imperialism.

To safeguard their hegemony, the Czechs dictated into the Constitution paragraphs which in practice prevented a change of the Constitution (the enactments about the necessity of a $3/5$ and $2/3$ majority). Czech hegemony was thus secured, because representatives of the non-Czech population could never attain this required majority in the Prague Parliament without the Czechs and, hence, could never upset Czech hegemony in the State in constitutional or parliamentary manner.

The dictated constitution and the Czech hegemony emanating therefrom were then safeguarded by the notorious "law for the protection of the Republic" (No. 50) of March 23, 1923, which made the 7,000,000 non-Czech citizens of the various nationalities liable to prosecution on the grounds of anti-state activities, if they persisted in their rightful demands for the recognition of and respect for their

right to self-determination, the principle upon which the Republic was supposed to have been founded. The Czech Communists used this law to advantage when they got hold of the key positions in the State in 1945 and, later, in 1948, had practically no trouble at all in seizing all power in the Republic in a "legal and constitutional" way.

Another law, the law regarding political parties (No. 201 of October 25, 1953), provided for the outlawing and dissolution of any political party if its activity seriously endangered the "constitutional unity" — and "constitutional unity" in practice simply meant Czech rule over the non-Czech citizens. On the basis of this law, the political demand for the territorial legislative autonomy of Slovakia — the condition under which the Slovaks decided to form a joint state with the Czechs — was cause for prosecution by the State. Dr. Ivan Dérer, who sold his Slovak birthright for a mess of Czech pottage, as Minister of Justice demanded on various occasions to use this law against the Hlinka Slovak People's Party, because it persistently demanded the fulfillment of the Pittsburgh Pact of May 30, 1918 — that is, states rights or full autonomy for Slovakia. Prague, however, ordered Dérer to withhold action; the centralists were not entirely blind to the development of the international situation, and the consequences of such action: the Republic would have undoubtedly collapsed long before 1939 if Dérer was not overruled. Czech centralism pulled in its horns a little and attempted to show the Slovaks that it favored them by not applying the law. Of course, the Slovaks, by that time, were wise to the Czech centralists.

The Anti-Democratic Regime of Czech Hegemony

Czech hegemony was also protected by a whole series of laws and regulations which emanated from the undemocratic Constitution which was forced on the non-Czech population. The Constitution, for example, "legalized" the notorious fiction — better said the international fraud — of the "Czechoslovak nation" in the political and ethnic sense, a nation which had never existed and, in the end, from the existence of which even its creators and propaga-

tors fled with their notorious Košice Agreement with the Communists in 1945. With the help of this fraud, the fiction of a national state was promoted against the reality of a nationalistic state. On this dictated Constitution rested also the language law with its notorious monstrosity — the “Czechoslovak language” — which was legalized and given a special status even though no such tongue ever existed. In practice this actually meant the hegemony of the Czech language on the territory of the entire state, including the lands inhabited by the 7,000,000 non-Czech inhabitants, a part of whom, for example the Sudeten Germans, had a higher level of culture and civilization than the “ruling” Czech nation. While the old Austrian Constitution issued from the principle of language equality, the Czecho-Slovak language law introduced the principle of the privileged position of the non-existent “Czechoslovak” language in the Republic.

Regional, county and local self-administration was maimed by legal regulations, which gave the Prague government the right to appoint one-third of the members of these “self-administering” organs. Since the government named 33 per cent of the officials, it only needed to gain 18 per cent of the electorate so that it could continue to rule “democratically” with the help of such an artificial majority against the actual majority of inhabitants of Slovakia, Ruthenia and the territories inhabited by the Germans. In Slovakia this 18 per cent was not too difficult to attain, with the aid of Czech officials under Prague, who placed thousands of Czechs in Slovakia in various capacities, and the help of the entire propaganda apparatus of the state, and political corruption, as well as police pressure.

With the help of a bit of “political geometry” in the Czech lands, for example, in the Prague voting district, only about 22,000 voters were needed to elect one deputy to parliament, whereas in many Slovak, Magyar, Ruthenian and German districts almost 30,000 votes were needed for one minister. This evidently helped the Czech minority to attain a majority in the Prague parliament. Here we had an actual case where the “largest minority ruled as a state

nation over the other minorities, which together numbered more adherents than the ruling nation" — as Dr. Hassinger of the university of Basel claimed. Czech bureaucratic officials censored the non-Czech press ruthlessly; protests against the existing order were squashed. For example, in 1922 alone 1498 editions of newspapers were confiscated by the Czech censor; instances of deletions of words, sentences, whole paragraphs and entire articles were more numerous.

In harmony with the structure and the spirit of this regime in so-called "Czechoslovak" governments, the Czechs as a rule held 75—80 per cent of the ministerships and the majority in parliament, so that the Czech minority in the State, contrary to the most fundamental principles of democracy, usurped practically all power of government and absolute control in the issuance of laws. How the Slovaks, for example, regarded the "Slovak" ministers in the Prague Government, was probably best described by deputy Martin Rázus, a Protestant minister and the president of the Slovak National Party, when on November 4, 1932, in the Prague parliament, he said: "Yes, by obligation we do have two Slovak ministers. But the sad part about it is the fact we do have ministers; but these ministers, however, are not the ministers of the Slovak nation; they are the ministers of the present Herrenvolk, but not the ministers of the Slovak nation."

Originally, by the peace agreements, the name of the country created by the Czechs and the Slovaks was spelled with a hyphen: **Czecho-Slovakia**. Thereby the federative character of that State was supposed to be stressed; also that the Czechs and the Slovaks were regarded as equal partners in the administration of the joint Republic; furthermore, it was supposed to indicate that the Czechs would rule in Czech lands and the Slovaks would rule in Slovakia, that is, states rights of each would be fully enjoyed and respected by both nations. All the peace agreements whereby this State was created designated the State in such a manner as a matter of principle; the hyphen prevailed. But as soon as the Czechs gained and consolidated

their hegemony, the term "Czecho-Slovakia" was changed to "Czechoslovakia." From 1923 the law declared this appellation legally proper and correct, and any one using the hyphen was liable to prosecution by the State. Thereby in a symbolic manner was supposed to be demonstrated the thesis regarding the fusion, or better said, the absorption of the Slovaks by the Czechs, so that Czech supremacy in the State could be guaranteed even numerically. Official statistics told the world how many Germans, Magyars, Poles, Ruthenians and Jews there were in Czecho-Slovakia, but not the number of Slovaks; how many seats were held in parliament by the Germans, Poles, Magyars and Ruthenians, but not how many were held by the Slovaks. And so it was with all statistics. The Slovaks, however, stubbornly resisted the spelling of the name of the Republic without the hyphen.

Rights of Minorities Repudiated

The régime of Czech hegemony in the Republic had ruinous consequences not only for the Slovaks, but the other nationalities as well. The Germans, Magyars, Poles and Ruthenians complained about injustices as much as the Slovaks did. It was not only Slovakia that was flooded with Czech officials and workers, but also the lands inhabited by the Ruthenians, Poles, Magyars and Germans. For example, between 1918 and 1938 there emigrated into Slovakia more than 200,000 Czech officials, businessmen and entrepreneurs. During that same time more than 200,000 Slovaks, lacking working opportunities in their homeland, had to emigrate to Australia, Argentina, Uruguay, Canada, the United States, Brazil, France and Belgium.

In that same period approximately 150,000 Czechs moved into the territory inhabited by the Germans. Similarly, the territories of the Magyars, Poles and Ruthenians were also flooded with Czechs. The Germans, for example, who represented 22.3 per cent of the population of the Republic, held only 12.2 per cent official posts on the railroads, 14.4 per cent in the Post Office, in the state administration only 13.1 per cent, and in the Officers Corps only 5.1 per cent were in active service.

In the central offices, ministries, the highest control offices, etc., the Slovaks represented only 1.3 per cent of the officials, but even these were subordinate and insignificant positions. All the citizens of the Republic, regardless of their nationality, were bound by the same obligations, but the Czechs alone enjoyed special privileges and better opportunities. The centralistic Prague government was in the hands of Czechs who regarded their nation as the ruling nation, their people as first-rate citizens, while the other nationalities were regarded as second-rate. The Czech government cried that Slovakia was just so much economic ballast, but fought tooth and nail to keep it in hand at all costs.

"Czechoslovak" democracy as propagandized by the Czechs and paid professional non-Czech propagandists was one thing, while the brand actually prevailing in Czechoslovakia something entirely different. A repetition of history: the Magyars, too, used to proclaim blatantly that the democratic system prevailed in Hungary, while at the same time they were brutally suppressing and exploiting all non-Magyar elements in the country. In the light of these facts, any reference to "Czechoslovak" democracy evoked a strong revulsion in the hearts of the millions of non-Czech inhabitants who were burdened with it. They knew in their hearts that it was fraud, even though the Czechs presented it to the world as the ultimate in democratic systems. The non-Czech nationalities were burdened with the same civic obligations as the Czechs were, but they did not enjoy equal rights and privileges and, therefore, it is quite understandable that at the first opportune moment — and that came in 1938–1939 — they did everything possible to escape from the embrace of this "isle of democracy."

"Czechoslovak" Democracy Was a Fraud

In this brief review of the "democracy" that was Czechoslovakia, the reader will not find details of all the aspects of the politics of Czech hegemony in the Republic. That would require a voluminous work. And practically nothing was said regarding the conditions after 1945, inasmuch the trampling upon the most fundamental rights of

man, carried out by the Beneš-Communist coalition, was so general that many pages would be needed to delineate only the most important of its aspects. The mass deportation of millions of people from their homeland, the outlawing and prevention of political parties, the limitation of the freedom of the press and assembly, tens of thousands of political prisoners, hundreds of the executed, the many unconstitutional decrees of Beneš, etc. — all this had happened with the cooperation of the Czech politicians, who today pose as champions of democracy.

It is regrettable that some people in the West even today do not make any noticeable effort to inform themselves of the true nature of so-called "Czechoslovak democracy" and its representatives. It is regrettable, indeed, that responsible people of western democracies still continue to recognize and favor the propagators of "Czechoslovakism" — former members of the Communist-dominated "National Front" government of Beneš and Gottwald, who supported the pro-Soviet policy of Beneš and, hence, are in a great measure responsible for the present terrible plight of the Czech and Slovak nations. Czecho-Slovakia was not a true democracy, but a fraud and a mockery of democracy. That was proved by the inhabitants of the State when the first great crisis struck and Czecho-Slovakia collapsed completely. No one, not even the Czechs themselves, fired a single shot to preserve it. Why should any western democratic government endeavor to preserve it against the will of the Slovaks and others of Czecho-Slovakia who are kept in that State only by force? There must be an answer somewhere!

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WHO SAID IT?

The Czechs and Slovaks had their State but not for longer than twenty years. What now remains is infinitely worse than what existed before... The political theories of (T. G.) Masaryk and Beneš collapsed because they could not bear the practical test of the times." — (SKUTEČNOST, review of the Czech refugees, London, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 33, Feb. 1951).

MILESTONES OF SLOVAK HISTORY

OCTOBER 6, 1938

The Slovak nation, one of the oldest Christian nations in Central Europe, decided to form a common political state with the Czech nation during World War I. Equality in all matters was the basis of that decision. Slovakia was to be governed as a state of the Czech-Slovak federation by the Slovaks and the Czech lands by the Czechs. The Pittsburgh Pact of May 30, 1918, drawn up and signed by T. G. Masaryk and representatives of the Czechs and the Slovaks of America, guaranteed Slovakia complete autonomy, i.e., home rule or states rights. Unfortunately, T. G. Masaryk repudiated the pact and condemned the very state he propagated to premature ruin.

For twenty years the Slovaks kept clamoring for recognition of and respect for their inherent rights, for the fulfillment of the bargain they had concluded with T. G. Masaryk, but to no avail. The Ruthenians, who had voluntarily entered the political state of Czecho-Slovakia on the basis of an autonomous region, were also sadly disappointed by the regime of T. G. Masaryk and his understudy, Dr. Edward Beneš. The forceful inclusion of 3,500,000 Sudeten Germans in the Czecho-Slovak Republic did not help relieve the tensions or to consolidate the state, but rather aggravated the situation. The regimes of T. G. Masaryk and Dr. Edward Beneš antagonized the non-Czech majority of the population against the Czechs and doomed the Republic to an early death. When the first major crisis struck, there was no one to defend the ill-fated Czecho-Slovakia and it collapsed like a house built of cards.

On October 6, 1938, the Slovaks made a great step forward toward unifying their forces in their struggle for state independence. All parties, except the Social Democrats and the Communists, accepted the principle of an autonomous Slovakia in the spirit of the draft of a bill, which was prepared by the Hlinka Slovak People's Party and made public June 5, 1938. The result of the October meet-

ings of the representatives of all Slovak parties in Žilina, Slovakia, was that "the Government of the Czecho-Slovak Republic named, in the place of the President of the Republic (a paragraph of the Constitutional Document), deputy Dr. Joseph Tiso, the executive vice-president of the Slovak People's Party, as minister for the administration of Slovakia. By a supplement to this law, the Government requested Dr. Tiso to name other Slovak ministers to execute governmental power in Slovakia. From this it is evident that the Prague Government had accepted the fundamental propositions of the Slovak People's Party and the other participating parties" (A-ZET, official organ of Dr. Beneš's National Socialistic Party, October 7, 1938). Dr. Edward Beneš, as is known, resigned the presidency of the Republic voluntarily on October 5, 1938.

The first Slovak autonomous government of Slovakia was composed of the following: Dr. Joseph Tiso, Premier and Minister of Interior; professor Matthew Černák, Minister of Education and National Enlightenment; Dr. Ferdinand Ďurčanský, Minister of Justice, Social Welfare and Health; Paul Teplanský, Minister of Agriculture, Public Works, Commerce, Business and Finance; John Lichner, Minister of the Mail and the Railroads. (*Slovenský Hlas*, Dr. Milan Hodža's publication, October 8, 1938).

Dr. Joseph Tiso, Černák and Ďurčanský were representatives of the Hlinka Slovak People's Party, while Teplanský and Lichner represented the party of Slovak republicans, since there really were only two genuine Slovak parties in Slovakia — the People's Party and the National Slovak Party. All the other parties were only affiliates of the various Czech and so-called "Czechoslovak" parties; the representatives of these parties spoke of the Slovak coalition parties, as is attested to by the "A-ZET" article of Emil Boleslav Lukáč of October 7, 1938. Analyzing and evaluating the Žilina events, Lukáč wrote:

"It was plainly necessary that the Slovak People's Party pass over from the position of opposition to a responsible position, one commensurate with its strength, to a leading position. It was necessary that it use its strength

especially today to protect Slovak national interests inside and outside its territory. Even the coalition parties of Slovakia have united on its main demand — the decentralization of public administration and a broad autonomy for Slovakia. And it was accepted even by the Government of the Republic. Slovakia shall have its legislative assembly, a Slovak government of all resorts, except finances, national defense, and foreign affairs — which are common resorts. Today all Slovak parties stand behind this agreement, behind this new arrangement of Slovak affairs, and, hence, even our National Socialistic Party in Slovakia. We shall stand by it loyally and responsibly.”

The republicans (agrarians) welcomed the first Slovak Autonomous Government even more enthusiastically. In their “SLOVENSKÝ TÝŽDENNÍK” (Slovak Weekly) of October 13, 1938, their leading editorial “Máme Slovenskú Vládu” (We Have a Slovak Government), contained the following:

“We recall that the (Hlinka Slovak) People’s Party not so long ago thought and appeared to be sufficient of itself for such a role. But when it actually came to the breaking of bread, it realized what a great responsibility it is before the nation and how much work must be accomplished to organize Slovak statehood and an autonomous, independent Slovak life. Under these circumstances and difficulties it was a real blessing that the Republican Party of Slovakia was determined with all its forces to build a Slovak autonomous state unit. . .”

Slovak centralists — the so-called “Czechoslovaks” who had defended and propagated a strong, centralized Prague government — openly and enthusiastically spoke out not only for autonomy, but for Slovak statehood after October 6, 1938. Their willingness to work with the Slovak People’s Party was not only evident, but also quite convincing, as demonstrated by their manifestations and the participation of the Republican Party in the Slovak Government.

Analyzing the whole background of these events, we find that the representatives of the political parties in Slovakia did nothing in Žilina which was not approved of by

Prague. And the Prague leadership of the coalition parties even gave public testimony of this on October 8, 1938, by stating:

"The undersigned representatives of the Czech political parties declare that — in the sense of the Žilina agreement of October 6, 1938 — we adopt the proposition of the Hlinka Slovak People's Party to issue a Constitutional law in regard to the autonomy of Slovakia as it was presented in the Assembly of Deputies in 1938 and published in the SLOVAK, No. 129, of June 5, 1938, and we bind ourselves that we shall endeavor to have it acted on and accepted as soon as possible."

The statement was signed by: Deputy Rudolph Beran, chairman of the Republican Party; Deputy Anthony Hampl, chairman of the Social Democratic Party; Deputy Dr. Klapka for the National Socialist Party; Deputy Monsignor Stašek for the Czech People's Party; Dr. Francis Hodáč, vice-chairman of the Party of Unity; and Deputy Rudolph Mlčoch, chairman of Tradesman's Party. (SLOVAK, October 9, 1938).

Here we have proof that even the leadership of the Social Democratic Party in Prague fully approved the Žilina Agreement, despite the fact that the Slovak People's Party did not come to any agreement with the Slovak Socialists.

It is quite obvious, therefore, that October 6, 1938 — Slovak Autonomy Day — was backed not only by the Hlinka Slovak People's Party, but also the rest of the Slovak civic parties then in existence. All went along with the People's Party willingly and spontaneously and accepted the responsibility for the future development of Slovakia. Whether they were sincere about it or not is questionable in the light of what transpired later, but the fact is that all political parties operating in Slovakia in 1938 — except the Social Democrats and the Communists — realized the necessity of uniting in the common interests of Slovakia, in fact in the interests of the national existence of the Slovak nation itself. They were not responsible for the tense international political situation of that time, but were sufficiently intelligent to adapt themselves accordingly and save

whatever could be saved under the given circumstances. It was, in fact, the old story of history repeating itself — all political leaders working together for the benefit of all the people of Slovakia, or hanging separately.

On October 6, 1938, the just demands of the Slovak nation, so aptly expressed by the Pittsburgh Pact of May 30, 1918, were finally recognized and fulfilled by the recalcitrant government of Prague. As we look back in retrospect today, we can only say that lack of foresight, statesmanship, Christian charity and democracy on the part of Dr. Edward Beneš and his National Socialists and other Czech leftist — so-called “progressive” — groups prevented the realization of Slovak autonomy sooner and precipitated the collapse of the Czecho-Slovak Republic. October 6, 1938, no matter how enemies of Slovak freedom and independence may look upon it, was a milestone in Slovak history, marking another lap of the march of the Slovak nation to freedom and complete political independence.

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WHO SAID IT?

“After the Turkish invasion came the religious wars which many historians made the mistake of regarding as manifestations of national resistance against Germanism. Here in Central Europe the conflicts were identical with those taking place in other parts of the Continent at the same time. The struggle of the Huguenots against Henry IV was no more a national conflict than the share of the Czechs in the Thirty Years’ War was a racial fight against Germanism. They fought against the Habsburgs because the latter were Catholics, and the Battle of the White Mountain (1620) the Czechs, together with their German ally, Prince Frederick, Elector of the Palatinate, were beaten by the Catholic troops of the Austrian emperor. The legend about the Mountain is an outstanding example of historical forgery, for it was a purely religious and dynastic affair.” — (F. O. Miksche — a Czech — in UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER, p. 71; Faber and Faber, Ltd., London).

THE EVOLUTION OF SLOVAK LITERATURE

ANTON BERNOLAK'S INFLUENCE

By Eleonor Podkrivacký

There still are some people who believe erroneously that the Slovak language was not written prior to the nineteenth century. The fact that living languages undergo change should be kept in mind by those who point to differences in the literary language of the Slovak people of today and in the language used a century or more ago. Also the history of a people should not be overlooked in the study of their language.

Among the Slav nations, most of which had varied external influences causing linguistic mutations, we find that the literary language of each, closely resembling that in contemporary use, had its formal beginnings in the late seventeenth, in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. For example, in the seventeenth century the Lusatians — though a very small nation numerically they have two main literary languages: Lower and Upper Lusatian — had grammars and selection of dialects for literary use in both their languages; during the eighteenth century after the reforms of Peter the Great, Lomonosov was responsible for the standardization of Russian; and from the sixteenth century through the nineteenth the "popular" Bulgarian was used in writings until 1869, when Drinov established the eastern dialect as the literary language.

Before examining the period when the Slovak language underwent literary formalization, it is necessary to explore its background briefly.

After the death of St. Methodius, who with St. Cyril propagated and strengthened Christianity among the Slovaks, German prelates who came to Slovakia in the tenth century substituted the Latin language for the Slovanic in the liturgy. Eventually Latin was used in public life, both literary and diplomatic. Latin was the official language used in documents in central Europe for several centuries. R. G. A. de Bray in *Guide to the Slavonic Languages* states

that in the period from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries the Slovak language was used with the Latin in some documents.

Perhaps the oldest written Slovak work is that of Václav of Bzenec, *Glossované spevy cirkevné*, a collection of religious songs which he wrote in 1385 in the dialect of Halič. Another of the most ancient written records is also a religious song, "Jezu Kriste šedný Kneže," which J. Kačka in *Dejiny literatúry slovenskej* dates back to the fourteenth or possibly the thirteenth century. And Fr. Hrušovský in *Slovenské Dejiny* tells of the use of the Slovak language made in the records of the guilds during the sixteenth century. This same historian relates that many Slovak expressions and phrases are to be found in documents written in Slovakia in the Czech language which in the fifteenth century (Hussite Movement) was used in official documents in addition to Latin and German.

German was in use because of the large German population in certain Slovak cities. Germans were given special privileges by the king who invited them to settle in sections of the country which afforded sources of wealth either because of natural resources (mines and mints, etc.) or because of their locations as trade centers. It must be kept in mind that for several centuries, by that time, the Slovaks had been ruled by foreign kings. S. Krčméry in *Sto päťdesiat rokov slovenskej literatúry* speaks of the three cultures in Slovakia which intermingled: the Latin in political, academic and religious life; the German in business and commercial life; and the Slovak in the home.

Early in the fifteenth century two events were responsible for the official use of Czech in some sections of Slovakia. In the first place there were the extensive raids and occupation by the Czech Hussites in western Slovakia. Secondly, Ján Jiskra, the renowned Czech Catholic warrior, quartered his army, which was made up of many Czech Hussites and some Germans, in central and eastern Slovakia, when he was entreated by Elizabeth, the queen-mother of Ladislav Posthumous, then a child, Duke of Austria, King of Bohemia, and Hungary, to prevent Vladislav of Poland

from usurping her son's throne. Jiskra maintained his hold on that section of Slovakia for many years, even after the death of King Ladislav in 1457.

The Turkish Wars in the sixteenth century left their mark also. There are legends, folk songs and poems in the Slovak language dating from that unhappy period which give accounts of the invasions of the Turks and the abduction of many Slovaks. In addition to the human lives lost or the great number of the population carried away into captivity, the devastation which the Turks brought upon the country is an irreparable loss because much historical and literary material perished in the pillaging.

Although there were so many unfavorable outside elements, as far as the language is concerned, the Slovak language did not fade away. On the contrary, by the seventeenth century a national consciousness of their heritage and culture began to manifest itself among the Slovaks. Catholic priests were the initial spark of the flame which was spread eventually throughout the country. An important center for this activity was in western Slovakia where the University of Trnava — whose press printed in 1655, among its first books, a Latin-Slovak hymnal — played a leading role in turning out men who realized that their native tongue was as important as other languages. The needs of the ordinary man had to be considered both in spiritual and temporal matters.

Students who knew Latin participated in plays in that language. However, the performances were often presented for audiences of non-academic people from neighboring towns, and there are evidences that plays were performed in Slovak early in the seventeenth century.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century with the Counter-Reformation came a definite concentration on writing in the vernacular instead of in Czech in, which language the Slovak Protestants continued writing their books. With the religious writings particularly of the Jesuits, although there are manuscripts and published works in Slovak by other religious orders, the process of grammatical consciousness of the Slovak language began. The number

and quality of writings by the Jesuits prompted J. Kačka, in his book mentioned earlier, to state that the Slovak language of that period could be called Jesuit Slovak.

By the second half of the eighteenth century the Slovak nationalistic revival was accentuated by greater political oppression. Among the controversial issues of the reforms of Marie Therese and Joseph I was the measure by which Latin was to be replaced by another official language in the empire. Laws were passed which established German as the official language in non-German lands of the empire. The Hungarians, who at first wished to keep Latin, reacted to this law by later insisting that Hungarian, and no other language, be taught in all the schools of Hungarian and non-Hungarian subjects in their domain. The Slovaks also reacted. In literature, both Latin and Slovak, writers referred back to the glorious past of the Slovaks, before the Hungarians settled in that part of Europe, when Christianity was introduced and when they had a powerful king and enjoyed political independence in the ninth century.

It was left for Anton Bernonák, through his philological and linguistic studies, to become the outstanding initiator of a literary Slovak language.

Bernolák's ancestry was distinguished. His family coat of arms dated back to 1681 when Leopold I added to their family name the title Slanický, derived from the town Slanica, in Orava County, where Anton was born October 4, 1762. His elementary education was completed in his native northeastern part of Slovakia, at Námestovo, from where he went south to central Slovakia to study in the classical high school (gymnazium) in Ružomberok. His talents were recognized by the archbishop of Ostrihom (Estergom in Hungary), whose protégé he became at the age of 16, and he was sent to study in the seminary in Bratislava in western Slovakia in 1778. After two years there he transferred to the seminary in Trnava from where, after two more years of study which he realized with high honors, he went to Vienna to study theology. Among the reforms of Joseph II were those which affected the Church. According to his reforms the theological course was also offered in the gen-

eral seminary which the Emperor established in the castle at Bratislava. The course was of a five-year duration. Hence, when Bernolák returned to Bratislava in the autumn of 1784, he had three more years of theology to complete.

While studying for the priesthood he became very interested in Slavic languages, especially in the study of his own tongue. By his twenty-fifth year he had written in Latin and published two works which are considered the basis of literary Slovak.

In the introduction to his **Dissertatio philologico-critica de literis Slavorum** which was completed May 21, 1787, Bernolák states that he was advised by circumspect men to write these works in order to establish rules for writing the Slovak language. In this dissertation he expressed the basic principles of Slovak literary language.

To make practical the principles of literary Slovak which he enunciated in the **Dissertatio**, he stated orthographic rules by which literary men would be guided in **Linguae Slavonicae per regnum Hungariae usitatae compendiosa sumul et facilis orthographia**. This second important work which he published also in 1787 was annexed to his famous **Dissertatio**. J. Vlček in **Dejiny literatúry slovenskej** states that Bernolák was well acquainted with the work done in the field of linguistics by predecessors such as Matej Bél and Pavel Doležal, both from the first half of the 18th century, and with the tendencies of the popular Slovak language to be found in the publications from Trnava. Bernolák's work was not revolutionary, but rather evolutionary, in that — contrary to his agreement with Bél that the best literary Slovak is that equidistant from the Czechs, Poles, and Hungarians, namely central Slovak — he practically followed the Catholic writers before him who wrote in the western dialect.

The significance of these works at that period in history cannot be underestimated. The newly-established seminary in Bratislava castle lasted only six years, until the death of Joseph I, but it housed annually approximately five hundred seminarians from all parts of Slovakia. The interest aroused in the seminarians by these linguistic stu-

dies was soon observed even in neighboring countries. And their efforts were encouraged surprisingly enough by men of their nationality who did not agree with their endeavors.

While he was a curate in Čeklis he had published in 1790, in Bratislava, a grammar written in Latin of the Slovak language entitled **Grammatica slavica**. (Sources vary in their spelling of the complete title of this work: J. Kačka lists it is **Grammatica slavica ad systema scholarum rationalium in dicionibus caesareo-regiis introductum accomodata**; Rev. J. Porubský varies from this only in "dictionibus"; and J. Vlček writes . . . **scholarum nationalium in ditionibus** . . .). Bernolák based his grammar on phonetics. He selected the western dialect — there are three main dialects in Slovakia: western, central, and eastern — as the most suited for literary writing. He eliminated diphthongs and soft "r's" (ř). He substituted "ó" for "u", and "i" for "j" and "y". The softening of the consonants "d, l, n, t" was accomplished according to his rules by softening the consonant "d, l, n, t" and writing "d'e," etc., instead of following the consonant with a soft vowel.

In 1791 he was appointed secretary to the Archbishop in Trnava. Undoubtedly he had begun earlier and continued in this city and elsewhere until his death in Nové Zámky, where he was pastor and supervisor of schools, January 15, 1813, compiling a dictionary **Slowár slowenský** in five languages: Slovak, Czech, Latin, German, Magyar. This six-volume masterwork consisting of some 5,300 pages was not published, however, until 1825–27, in Budin, with the financial backing of the Canon of Ostrihom, Juraj Palkovič (not to be confused with his contemporary, the Lutheran Jiří Palkovič), who completed Bernolák's dictionary with the sixth volume.

During his appointment in Trnava, Bernolák founded in 1792, the literary and cultural society "Slowenské učené Towarišstwo" (Slovak Learned Society) whose aim it was to further the advancement of education and culture of the Slovak people by means of Slovak literature. The majority of the members of this group, numbering close to five hun-

dred, were Catholic priests who promised to write Slovak books and support the propagation of Slovak literature.

Branches of this society were established throughout Slovakia. Sources do not all list the same towns where literary centers were formed. Š. Krčméry names only three towns where branches were formed: Nitra, Rovné, and Banská Bystrica. To these centers are added Sol'ná Baňa near Prešov by J. Vlček, J. Kačka and J. Porubský, and the two last named authorities mention Trenčín as well. The historian Fr. Hrušovský enumerates Nitra, Rovné, Banská Bystrica, Solivar, Rožňava and Košice in Slovakia. He goes on to state that the society was represented also in other lands. In Austria there was a branch in Vienna, and in Hungary there was a group in Jager. Thus the writers of the Bernolák school decided to meet the literary needs of those not living in their homeland.

Among the society's most outstanding literary men, in addition to its founder, were Juraj Palkovič, who translated the Bible into the Slovak language; the Archbishop of Ostrihom, Alexander Cardinal Rudnay, who besides writing many sermons and translating Cicero assisted the society financially; Juraj Fándli, also a priest, who even in his botanical and agricultural works urged the Slovak people to a greater appreciation of their mother tongue; another priest, the first famous Slovak poet, Ján Hollý; the first Slovak literary historian, Rev. Michael Rešetka; and Martin Hamuljak who, in 1834, co-founded another organization in Budapest, the "Spolek milovníkov řeči a literatury slovenskej" (Organization of the Lovers of the Slovak Language and Literature) to expand the work commenced by Bernolák's society.

Varied were the types of books published by the Bernolák school of writers. Their publications consisted of theses on practical agriculture; religious, poetic and pedagogic works; and historical, literary and linguistic studies.

Truly, Anton Bernolák and his group are men worthy of admiration for the great love for their language and the efforts they put forth for its sake.

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SLOVAK AND EUROPEAN SEPARATISM

(AN INTERVIEW WITH THE LATE ROYAL TAYLOR)

Joseph A. Mikus

"The National Committee for a Free Europe" has a district office in Paris. After 1949, political exiles from Central Europe, from newspapermen to students desiring scholarships, visited this office seeking American aid. The Czechs, in particular, passed frequently through its doors.

In order to inform Americans that there was a large and well-organized group of Slovaks in Paris which desired to have direct contact with political personalities in the free West, I sought an appointment by telephone, one day in the summer of 1950, with Mr. Loyal Taylor, Chief of the American Division of NCFE in Paris.

When I appeared in the waiting room of the office on Foch Avenue at five o'clock the following afternoon, I was welcomed by a pleasant, elderly gentleman. Shaking my hand and smiling while measuring me from head to foot, he greeted me with the words:

"So you are that Slovak separatist!"

"That depends on how you take it, Mr. Taylor," I replied. "It is evident that until now you have been informed by the Czechs. It is well that I have come."

"Well, welcome and have a chair!"

"Thank you; gladly! As soon as I hang my coat I will explain our stand on this matter."

"I am very curious," he said.

In the meantime, we had entered his office and sat down. Mr. Taylor crossed his legs and settled himself behind a large desk, and I made myself comfortable in the easy chair opposite him.

"The matter is very simple," I began. "The difference between the Czechs and the Slovaks is the same as between any two individuals. Certainly, Mr. Taylor, you would not think to claim, for example, that there is any relationship between you and me that could be designated as separatism. We are two different persons, not?"

"That I admit," Mr. Taylor said, "but I am not certain that your comparison is correct. You form with the Czechs one Czechoslovak (sic) nation, I mean, one State."

"That is what the Czechs claim. But that is not true," I answered. "We are two nations, two historic and ethnic individualities which existed long before Czecho-Slovakia and which, since 1918, formed one State on a basis of a mutual and voluntary decision. The original aim of Czecho-Slovakia was to guarantee political freedom to both nations within the joint State, to the Czechs as well as to the Slovaks. That is what Beneš said at the peace conference. That is the way it is stated in the Treaty of St. Germain. But, since the Czechs by unilateral action changed the original purpose of the Czecho-Slovak State, and misused this jointly-created body, so that through the fiction of a 'Czechoslovak' nation they could enthrone their own hegemony, the Slovaks ceased to consider this State as their own."

"These, then, are the reasons which led the Slovaks to separatism?" Mr. Taylor inquired.

"Well, taken logically, as I have already stated, there can be no question about a Czech and Slovak separatism. It would be possible to talk about separatism only where a breach of a natural entity unit would be concerned. Separatism cannot be applied in describing the relationship of one nation to another. They can be close or distant neighbors; they can be friends or enemies; but not separatists. Our relationship to the Czechs is an **international** relationship, and the Czecho-Slovak State was actually the result of that international interest for the guarantee of the freedom of its peoples. As soon as this interest faded on the one side, so fell Czecho-Slovakia — just as a bridge falls, when the supporting pillars on one side of the river are washed out by a flood."

"Just what do you mean?" interrupted Mr. Taylor.

"Well, as you certainly will admit, we signed a treaty with the Czechs in 1918, the contents of which they changed on their own initiative and to their own advantage. To put it more concretely, we ordered ten wagons of wheat and they delivered ten wagons of chaff. Naturally, we refused to accept the delivery."

"What exactly do you wish to say when you claim that the Czechs unilaterally changed the treaty with the Slovaks regarding a common state?" pressed Mr. Taylor.

"Specifically this: in 1920, the Prague Government dictated a Constitution for Slovakia which deprived the Slovaks of all national rights," I explained.

"How did it do that?" Mr. Taylor asked with much surprise. "Why Masaryk's Czecho-Slovakia was a democratic state! And, as far as I know, the Constitution was not dictated by the Government but was adopted by the Czecho-Slovak parliament."

"In regard to the first point, there are democracies and democracies," I replied. "There is an American democracy, a British democracy, a French democracy. There was, then, a 'Czechoslovak' democracy and now there is a 'people's' democracy. What I mean to say is that these all differ, that is, they are political systems of varied content. In regard to the Constitution, you are right in saying that it was adopted by the so-called National Revolutionary Assembly. What, perhaps, you do not know, is that **the members of this so-called parliament had been named by the Government. In short, the revolutionary Government appointed the revolutionary parliament which confirmed and adopted the revolutionary Constitution which this same revolutionary government presented to it.**"

"Dr. Mikuš, are you serious in making this claim?" asked Mr. Taylor with astonishment.

"It seems to me, Mr. Taylor, that it would be out of place were I not to speak seriously," I replied. "But I will tell you another incredible thing. Mr. Beneš, as Minister of that revolutionary government, named himself and eleven other Czechs as SLOVAK 'deputies' to this revolutionary parliament."

"Really? I must admit that this is exciting and unfamiliar history to me."

"That does not surprise me, Mr. Taylor. The period during which the Czecho-Slovak Republic was created, as well as the individual acts of the 'Czechoslovak' democracy, is a terrain purposely bedimmed, from the very beginning, by

Czech propaganda. A strict, 'blackout,' imposed by Czech propaganda and Czech political history, hangs over this period."

"No matter what the situation was in the past, Dr. Mikuš, I believe that you underestimate the determination with which the Czechs will fight for the maintenance of the Czecho-Slovak State."

"I, on the other hand, am of the opinion that the West is not fully aware of the tenacity of the Slovaks in their struggle for national independence. Moreover, while the struggle of the Czechs is ordinary greed for political power, the struggle of the Slovaks is much more. It is a struggle for freedom, for the very existence of the nation. While a state is only a form, a nation is a living, moral being. Even Masaryk, whom the Czechs like to quote so much, recognized the priority of a nation over a state when he said: 'When individual nations are striving for their independence and are attempting to break up states in which they have until now been incorporated, that is not a fight against humanity and internationalism, but a fight against those who used the states for an artificial levelling of the status among peoples and political uniformity. Humanity, however, does not seek uniformity but union, and it is the independence of nations which will make possible an organic association, an organic federation of Europe'."

"That is an astounding statement," ejaculated Mr. Taylor.

"Certainly! But it is important to know when Masaryk said these words. That quotation does not come from Masaryk, the post-war statesman, but from Masaryk, the exiled politician, who, in 1917, in his book **The New Europe**, was explaining to the Allies why Austria-Hungary should be broken up. Even though the Slovaks regard Masaryk as an unfriendly personal, nevertheless, except for a few national separatists, we all agree with him on this point."

"Then you do admit that there are separatists among the Slovaks?" said Mr. Taylor, smiling triumphantly.

"There are! How could there not be? The question is, who are they? It is not Sidor, or Durčanský, as the Czechs claim."

"Then who can they be?"

"They are, beginning with Papanek, the Slovaks in the so-called 'Council of Free Czechoslovakia'."

"Dr. Mikuš, your deductions certainly surprise me."

"Believe me, Mr. Taylor, that was not my intention. But it is as clear as the sun. The Slovaks are a nation and a political individuality in Central Europe. From a national standpoint, those Slovaks are separatists who deserted their national heritage, joined the Czechs of their own free will, formed the 'Council of Free Czechoslovakia' with them and, so, as a minority, frankly disregard the will of the nation from which they descended. This is a classical example of separatism."

"Well, upon my word, this is the first time I ever heard of it! It certainly is something when a separatist like you, designates men like Papanek separatists."

"I suppose it will remain so with these gentlemen until they die," I said. "They have lived and died so long with the Czechs that politically they have become completely captured by them. The Slovak nation will probably have to strike them off its list. Just look well. Even now they are setting out on the political waters of Central Europe playing host on board to the Czech secessionists. And with them they would like to win in the fight for a thing which, from the point of view of European development, must certainly collapse."

"You mean, perhaps, with Chudoba, Prchala, etc."?

"No! Certainly not!" I contradicted, laughing heartily. "I mean with Zenkl, Ripka, etc."

"I must say, Dr. Mikuš, that I find it difficult to overcome my astonishment over your unusual interpretation of affairs."

"It is possible. But, just think over it, Mr. Taylor. Europe is moving and beginning to unite. There will be a joint European coal and steel. There is much talk of a European Council at Strassburg, of a European parliament, even of a European army. But Zenkl and his group do not wish to see such a development. He continues to see another Ver-

sailles Czecho-Slovakia, which guaranteed to the Czechs priority in power. Do you not think that these gentlemen 'let the world pass them by' as the Czech poet Vrchlický would have said of them? Don't you think that the politics of the 'Council of Free Czechoslovakia' is a typical case of European secession? When I compare the politics of the Czechs and their Slovak collaborators to the effort expended for a united Europe, it appears to me entirely the same as if the State of Ohio and the State of Pennsylvania, for instance, attempted to secede from the American Union and to establish an independent federated State, Penn-Ohio, right in the heart of the United States."

"I note, Dr. Mikuš, that your comparisons become bolder as you continue."

"That, too, is possible," I said, smiling. "Nevertheless, one thing is certain. While America certainly would not tolerate any secession in her midst, yet politically and financially she supports the open separatism of the 'Council of Free Czechoslovakia' in Central Europe. For today anyone, living between Germany and the Soviet Union who is for the status quo of 1918, is a European secessionist and separatist. Yet, on the other hand, the Slovaks who are for a free Slovakia in a federated Europe are apparently ignored by America.

. . .

As I was leaving, Mr. Taylor accompanied me to the door and, shaking his head, made a final comment:

"I lived in Budapest many years and I heard much of Slovakia. I confess, however, that our conversation has troubled many of my current views. I must give it more thought."

"If that is true, my visit to you will be well justified. Until we meet again, Mr. Taylor."

Bowing to him, I thought to myself: "It would be fatal for America, if in such a dynamic period as exists today, her destiny and the destiny of the whole world should be directed by political conformists."

But this reflection was not heard by Mr. Taylor.

DR. HUBERT RIPKA'S VERSION OF

THE COMMUNIST "PUTSCH" IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

Karol Sidor

Fourteen months after the Communists took over Czecho-Slovakia, Hubert Ripka, former minister of various resorts of the late Dr. Edward Beneš, decided to write a series of articles under the heading of "A Prefabricated Revolution" (*Une Révolution Préfabriquée*). The articles, telling what happened in Prague in February 1948, were published in several European dailies.

Why Ripka waited so long to tell the world his version of what happened in Czecho-Slovakia early in 1948, he does not divulge, but it is quite obvious that he wanted time to do a little healing. Ripka's trade was journalism. He was the editor of the "Lidové Noviny" (People's News), the daily of the Czech intelligentsia published in Brno, and during his six years in exile he was Minister of Propaganda — and what propaganda! — of Dr. Beneš's London government-in-exile. Ripka, then, was able and capable of writing.

The Roman daily "Il Popolo" paid quite a tribute to Ripka when it began publishing his series of articles. It presented Ripka as "**the only Czechoslovak democratic minister, who successfully escaped from his country after last February's putsch**!"

Of course, that was a bit far-fetched, because we know that ministers Zenkl, Kočvára, Stránský, Pietor, Procházka, Majer and Franek also escaped from Prague after the February "putsch." These colleagues of Ripka were just as "**Czechoslovak**" and "**democratic**" as he was himself. They all had one thing in common with Ripka: **they helped Beneš sell out both the Slovaks and the Czechs to the USSR.**

It is quite significant that after such a "terrible putsch" so many Czech ministers, officials and leading politicians could escape without incident or accident. Robert Ingram — author of "After Hitler Stalin?" — wrote about this phenomenal exodus in the Swiss "VATERLAND" of

September 25, 1948. One is led to suspect with Ingram that so many Czech ministers, generals, politicians and thousands of Czech government officials and workers could hardly escape without incident or accident without a "deal" with Comrade Gottwald.

Any one who has read Ripka's articles must admit that Ripka was careful not to attack Gottwald or Zápotocký. What is more, Ripka did not confess that he played bad politics, or that he was sorry for what he had done, or that he would never again collaborate with Communism. On the contrary, Ripka wrote:

"Today more than ever before, I cannot stop believing that a free and independent Czecho-Slovakia can exist only in Europe that is brought to balance, where the West and Russia find a proper agreement to collaborate. Even the events of February 1948 could not shake me from this conviction, which remains the basis of my whole conception of national politics." — ("Figaro," Paris, April 4, 1949).

Stanislav Mikolajczyk, Nagy Ferencz, and other refugees from beyond the Iron Curtain wrote in a different tone. They confessed that they were mistaken in thinking they could negotiate a decent agreement with Soviet Russia. But Ripka stated publicly, even after the so-called February "putsch," **that he shall persist in his error**, and his articles only confirm the fact that in the "new" Czecho-Slovakia which Ripka would build — **he would again cultivate contacts with the Communist USSR just as enthusiastically and loyally as does Antonin Zápotocký today in the name of Czecho-Slovakia.**

Ripka is loath to admit that politically he is bankrupt. He keeps on talking about a **"new agreement"** between the West and Russia — meaning Czecho-Slovakia when he says **"West."** In fact, what he told us in his articles was equivalent to saying **that he and his "Czechoslovak democratic" colleagues would even now be collaborating with the Communists and Stalin's stooge in Czech-Slovakia, if they would have been allowed to keep their ministries.**

But in Washington, Ripka, Zenkl and the other so-called **"Czechoslovak democrats"** — now organized in the

"Council of Free Czechoslovakia" — talk about their fight against Communism. What kind of fight against Communism? As far as is known there was no fight against Communism in Czecho-Slovakia as a whole, **but only in Slovakia.** Deception, appeasement, capitulation, and shameful flight into other lands can hardly be called a "fight against Communism"! The mass "escape" of Czech Socialists was undoubtedly arranged and assured in advance, and the so-called "Czechoslovak democrats" did not escape empty-handed either.

What can be truthfully said about the fight of the Czech emigration against Communism? Only this: **We are still patiently waiting for it to start!**

It appears to us that Czech emigrants — both the right and left wings — are agreed on only one thing: **to carry on their fight against Slovak emigrants and refugees whom they have termed "separatists."** They vilify them before the Red Cross, the U. S. occupation forces and their allies, and the U. S. State Department. The Slovaks, according to them, simply are no good; they are Hitlerites, Fascists, Nazis and, worst of all, **"separatists."**

According to Ripka, Zenkl, Lettrich and other "has-beens" of Dr. Edward Beneš's bankrupt political kingdom, the Slovaks have no right to freedom and independence, no right to an independent political state. **To the "Czechoslovak democrats" the fight against Slovak freedom and independence means more than the fight against Communism.** T. G. Masaryk and Beneš fooled the world in 1918. Beneš did it again in 1945. And their disciples are determined to continue the propagation of the fraud that was "Czechoslovak democracy."

Ripka, Zenkl and their followers are not fighting Communism. The ranks of Czech emigrants are full of agents of the Czech secret police and spies of the Communist Party. More Czech emigrants "escaped" **back home** than any other class of emigrants. That is not surprising to any one who really knows the Beneš Czechs. There was very little difference between Beneš's "Czechoslovak democracy" and Communism. The former was in fact a handmaid of the

latter. Beneš and his "Czechoslovaks" could not suffer political opposition any more than the Reds or the Nazis. Look at their records: they tell us that these queer "democrats" played along with Communism and actively collaborated with Communists for many years.

Ripka enthusiastically welcomed the collaboration and eternal friendship between Soviet Russia and Czecho-Slovakia in 1935 (Vd. his article in "Zahraniční politika," Prague, 1935, pgs. 14-17). At that time Ripka wrote that the Czechs wanted to be **"not only mediators between the old West and the new East, but also factors, actively cocreating a synthesis of lasting values of the old European civilization and the new civilization being born in the Soviet Union."**

Ten years later — in 1945 — the Beneš Czechs really got the chance to play the role of "factors." They were given the opportunity "to actively cocreate a synthesis" between Russia and Czecho-Slovakia. Just how successful they were in this, we shall see later when we analyze Ripka's articles. But let us say at the outset: **in Central Europe it was only the BENEŠ CZECHS who actually wanted to collaborate with the Communists!**

In May, 1945, when the Soviet armies rolled into Prague, it was only the Czechs of all the peoples of Central Europe who welcomed them with open joy and enthusiasm as the "armies of liberation." In the first Czech post-war government, Clement Gottwald, chairman of the **Czech Communist party** was named Vice-Premier and, after the parliamentary elections in 1946, as Premier of the government in Prague by "president" Beneš. At that time nowhere did the Communists in a parliamentary election receive so many votes as they did in Bohemia and Moravia; in Slovakia they were beaten decisively by the Slovak electorate.

Such was the political line of Beneš and his followers. In Prague the Communists, and not Beneš and Ripka, became the "factors." And the Communists lost no time in creating Ripka's "synthesis" of 1935 between the "old West" and the "new East." Beneš and Ripka had prepared for this synthesis already since 1935 and were beaming

with joy because the whole world was astounded by their political recklessness. Collaboration with the Communists in internal politics had begun in 1935 when Beneš needed the votes of the Communist Party to be elected president. The Communists promised to vote for Beneš on the condition that Gottwald, Kopecký and Štětka, whose political mandates the Court of Election of Czecho-Slovakia would not verify and approve, would be approved as members of the Prague parliament. Beneš promised to do that little thing and so enabled three Communists to become members of parliament in 1935. The Communists voted for Beneš and later proved their sympathy for him by voting for the presidential budget every year. The Communists were for everything that "President" Beneš himself asked for in the budget, but either refrained from voting or voted against all other items of the State budget.

When Beneš resigned as president of Czecho-Slovakia in June, 1948 — the second time within a decade — the Communists voted him full presidential pay for life and magnanimously gave him the Lány Castle and the properties belonging to it. In a word, Beneš and Ripka did collaborate with the Communists for many years. That collaboration did not cease because of ideological reasons, but only because the Communists in February, 1948, told their collaborators what amounted to: "We thank you with communistic sincerity for your collaboration of many years with us. You can go now; we do not need you any more. You can even go abroad if you wish; at home you are useless to us, and if you go abroad we shall not fear you."

"The Czechoslovak people" — said Hubert Ripka in his article in the "IL POPOLO" (4-30-49) — "with singular joy welcomed the first allied treaty with Russia in 1935."

In the first place, no "Czechoslovak" people exists, ethnically speaking. But there are Czechs and Slovaks. There are two nations — the Czech and the Slovak — who do react to all phenomena according to their training and traditions. And so it was with the treaty of Beneš with Stalin in 1935: the Czechs reacted one way, while the Slovaks reacted altogether differently. The Czechs reacted "with singular

joy;" they welcomed that treaty, because they thought — just as Ripka himself had thought in 1935 — that together they would be able to form a synthesis of the "old" European civilization and the "new" civilization which was being born in the Soviet Union.

Soviet civilization was not brought to Europe by Ripka, but by the soldiers of the Soviet armies. The nations of the "old" civilization felt the sting of this "new" civilization on their bodies. And they shall continue to feel it as long as they do not accept it 100 per cent by discarding the "old" civilization which was founded on Christianity and is almost 2000 years old. Personally, Ripka was terrified by Soviet "civilization" in practice. He did not remain in Czecho-Slovakia to take part in the creation of the "synthesis," but fled far beyond her borders. Yes, as far as he could go from this "new" civilization which in 1935, he praised so highly and recommended so zealously not only to the Czech people, but to the whole world as well.

Why did Ripka do that? Did he not know what was happening in the Soviet Union? From 1918 to 1935 there were about 100,000 Russians, Ukrainian and White Russian emigrants in Czecho-Slovakia. They had fled from the Soviet Union and told the Czechs what they saw and experienced in Soviet Russia. The Beneš Czechs, however, did not believe those eye-witnesses. The Czechs were blinded by their old love for the "Slovanic East" and **thought that Communism of the 1935 vintage was no longer the Communism of 1917.** They forgot that Communism, as a doctrine and a system of government, is one and the same for all peoples and all times. It does not relate only to the Russian Czars, but to all nations of the earth and to all states. The substance of Communism is not subject to the changes of time. Ripka evidently met with real Communist civilization only in 1948, in Prague, when it took away his ministry. He fled before it, we are supposed to believe, to save his life. And yet in 1949 he wrote that he still believed in collaborating with the USSR.

Ripka, too, was a product of Czech national development, which was always directed to the left. The Czechs

made Ján Hus (1370-1415) the symbol of their rebellion against Rome. They grouped under his banner and always emphasized more and more the negativistic elements of Hus' character, suppressing all his positive qualities. As a result large groups of the Czech nation, matriculated as Catholics at baptism, got themselves in the periphery of world Christianity, their roots of solidarity with the Christian civilization of the west dried up in time and the Czech masses all the more readily joined the "new" civilization which Ripka said was being born in the Soviet Union.

This ideological development of the Czechs to the left explains why in 1935 the Czechs welcomed a treaty with Moscow and why in 1946 in the parliamentary elections in Czecho-Slovakia the international and atheistic Communist Party came out on top in Bohemia and Moravia.

But the Czechs were accustomed to belonging to large economic and political units. Their outstanding historian, Francis Palacký, wrote to the Frankfurt Assembly in 1848: "The preservation of Austria, its integrity and consolidation, is and must be a great and important thing not only to the Czech nation, but also to the whole of Europe, nay, to all humanity and culture." That same Palacký is the author of the statement: **"If Austria did not exist, we would have to create it."**

Dr. Edward Beneš shared similar ideas. In his book, *"Le Problem Autrichien et la Question Tchèque"* (pg. 307) he wrote in 1908: **"Frequently we hear talk about the collapse of Austria. I absolutely do not believe it. The historical and economic ties that mutually unite the nations of Austria are too strong to allow Austria to collapse."** This was written at a time when the Czechs were becoming a nation of officials and directors, administering not only in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, but even in Galicia, a significant part of Vienna and later even in Bosnia and Hercegovina. True, this was all under the supervision of Vienna and according to her laws.

During the first World War T. G. Masaryk and Edward Beneš came upon the idea of making the Czech nation independent by destroying Austria-Hungary. To help them

with that plan they succeeded in getting 1,500,000 Slovaks to whom T. G. Masaryk had solemnly promised in Pittsburgh, Pa., on May 30, 1918, that Slovakia, within the framework of Czecho-Slovakia, would have, among other things, her own assembly, her own courts and her own schools. On the other hand, Dr. Edward Beneš, with his signature attached to the Peace Treaty of St. Germain (September 19, 1919), had guaranteed the Ruthenians territorial autonomy, a legislative assembly, their own governor, etc. Both Masaryk and Beneš later repudiated their solemn promises. As long as Masaryk and Beneš ruled Czecho-Slovakia, neither the Slovaks nor the Ruthenians were guaranteed autonomy.

Nobody bothered to ask the other peoples of Czecho-Slovakia — the 3,500,000 Germans, about a million Magyars, some 200,000 Poles, etc., whether they wanted to live together with the Czechs in the common state of Czecho-Slovakia. **The first Constitution of 1920 was approved by the Prague parliament when that body did not have a single representative of the Germans, the Poles, Magyars and Ruthenians, and when the Slovaks were represented not by deputies elected by the Slovak people, but by deputies named by Prague, i.e., by T. G. Masaryk and Edward Beneš.** And that Constitution — a typical Beneš creation — remained unchanged and was binding upon every citizen of Czecho-Slovakia until November, 1938.

It is understandable that the majority of nations of the Republic did not fare well in Czecho-Slovakia. The existence of Czecho-Slovakia was not supported by the will of the majority of her inhabitants. The Czechs themselves knew that, and the old desire for broader economical and political spheres, whereby the life of the Czechs could better be safeguarded and protected, began to awaken in them. They knew that internally Czecho-Slovakia was weak and that externally she was threatened by the Germans. Czech leaders, therefore, began looking toward the Soviet Union which embraces one-sixth of the universe. They began to tell their people and the world that the Soviet Union was a Slavonic land, that a "new" civilization and a new ally and

defender of the Czech nation, especially against German aggression was being born there.

This thought was strengthened by the Czech-Soviet Treaty of 1935. The Czechs saw before themselves the vast expansiveness of the Soviet country which was incomparably larger and richer than Austria-Hungary. Culturally and politically the Russians were far behind the Czechs. The Czechs dreamed that in time they might even rule the Russian roost! They thought that by collaborating with the Soviets they would sooner or later find themselves on top even if it were only in the sense of the old Czech and even sickly inclination toward Panslavism — at one time the Czarist and Orthodox variety and now the Red and atheistic kind.

Slovak national development went along a completely different course. The Slovaks not only did not welcome the treaty with Moscow in 1935, but openly condemned it through their elected deputies in the Prague parliament. The Slovak nation built its spiritual world consistently on its own national tradition. That tradition was Christian. It was created with equal zeal by both the Slovak Catholics and the Slovak Protestants. That Slovak tradition is the common property of all Slovaks, no matter what their political or religious beliefs.

The Slovak Protestant L'udovit Štúr (1815-1856), Slovak patriot and national philosopher, left the Slovak nation in his books valuable sources on how to correctly orientate itself in new social and national tendencies. Štúr's book **"The Slavs and the World of the Future,"** published after his death, has this to say about the Communism of his day:

"In every instance Communism means the collapse and the destruction of the state. Communism arrived at this aim through atheism and apostacy from Christianity. In every form of Communism, no matter what its origin, the outlook on life is dark, lacking every tender joy. It brings the most cruel slavery. Communism, let it strive and pretend in any manner whatsoever that it will make all peoples share in all rights, nevertheless, knows nothing about humanity; it degrades humanity and, because it holds to sys-

tems that are impractical and unrealizable, it belongs among the most stupid innovations that have thus far been created by the human mind."

The Slovak Catholic priest Ján Palárik (1822-1870) wrote a dissertation in 1864 "About Slovanic Mutuality." In it he resolutely stands for a Slovak State and desires to see it in a federation of states in Europe. But never under the direction of Russia. Palárik strongly repudiated Russian Panslavism and predicted that "the whole of Europe would rebel against the Slovanic peoples" if they should ever come under the rule of the Russians.

The Slovak Protestant, Milan R. Štefánik (1880-1919), a General in the French Army and the first Minister of War in Czecho-Slovakia, was in Russia in 1918-1919 and saw Communism at close range. In February, 1919, he telegraphed his government at Prague: **"To flirt with Bolshevik tendencies would be comparable to foresaking the path of honor and sane reason. The fight against Bolshevism in all its manifestations must prevail in our politics."**

On such foundations, then, was built the Slovak stand against Communism. It was built on the foundations of Christianity and nationalism, and never on the foundation which Mussolini and Hitler gave to their anti-Communism. The Communists and their friends had proclaimed that Mussolini and Hitler devised anti-Communism in Europe and that the Slovaks had taken it over from them. That does not correspond with the truth. Slovak philosophers long before Mussolini and Hitler warned their nations not to accept Communistic teaching.

In the political life of Slovakia the party of Msgr. Andrew Hlinka consciously fortified and strengthened this Slovak anti-Communism in the broad masses of the Slovak nation. Anti-Communism had thus become a component part of Slovak national beliefs. That is why the party of Andrew Hlinka protested against the approval of Beneš's treaty with Stalin in 1935 when it came up for approval on the floor of the Prague Parliament. At that time Hlinka's Party had 30.1 per cent of all the voters in Slovakia, while the Communist Party in Slovakia had 13 per cent, and the

party of Beneš and Ripka only 3.2 per cent of the total Slovak electorate. The Slovak standpoint was ideologically and rightfully represented by Hlinka's Party which was the first and largest political party in Slovakia since 1925. On November 6, 1935, as a Slovak deputy I spoke in the name of Hlinka's Party on the floor of the Prague parliament. In the presence of the Foreign Minister, Dr. Edward Beneš, I said:

"Alas, foreign policy under the direction of Dr. Edward Beneš has deviated from the tendency that General Štefánik followed in 1919. He requested the Prague government to fight against Bolshevism in all its manifestations and warned not even to flirt with Bolshevik tendencies. Even flirting with Bolshevik tendencies he called foresaking the road of honor and sanity. In the meantime the Prague government already concluded various agreements with the bloody offspring of Bolshevism, the Soviet Union.

"The Hlinka Slovak People's Party rejects the theory of Bolshevism, condemns its bloody practices as well as its inhuman methods, and with a very heavy heart tolerates the fact that Czecho-Slovakia has deviated from the course that was plotted by her co-founder and first Minister of War, General Štefánik. The normalization of diplomatic contacts can be understood even between such structurally different states as is our democratic Czecho-Slovak Republic and the Soviet Union. Finally other states similar to ours have such diplomatic contacts. But immediately following the establishment of contacts, there were so many expressions of sympathy within the Czecho-Slovak Republic for the Soviet Union and its system that this must fill us — who are nationally orientated in a Christian way — with fears about the future Czecho-Slovakia. To tie our destiny with the destinies of the Soviet Union, to build on agreements signed by Bolsheviks, I consider as the greatest blunder made by our present foreign policy.

"We Slovaks warn the Czechs away from the political mistakes being committed by our Foreign Minister, Dr. Edward Beneš, because too zealously he binds us with the Soviet Union that is so distant to us. In the interests of the

State we demand a change in the line followed by our foreign policy, we demand that the defense of the State be built on a more realistic basis — one that conforms more with the mentality of the population. Stating all these insufficiencies, I introduce them as one of the reasons that force us Slovaks **not to express our confidence in the present leadership of our foreign policy.**"

Is it necessary to bring in more evidence to show that the Slovaks were consistently orientated anti-Communistic-ally? It proves conclusively that Ripka was wrong when he said that "the Czecho-Slovak people unanimously welcomed with joy the first allied agreement with Russia in 1935." The Czechs, especially the Sovietophile Czech intellectuals headed by Ripka, were made happy by the treaty. The Slovaks, however, experienced absolutely no joy on that occasion; nay, they criticized and rejected the treaty and voted against it in 1935 in the Prague Parliament. And this also attests to the fact that we are here concerned with two very different nations whose development and political convictions were altogether distinct and different.

Ripka was right when he said that after the conclusion of agreements with Moscow, in 1935 and 1943, Beneš and his government expressed **"their complete confidence in the Soviet government."** In return they expected the Soviet to return the friendship, confidence and, above all, the assurance that the USSR shall not intervene in our internal affairs."

"That confidence has been betrayed" — Hubert Ripka is screeching today. In February 1948 Moscow proceeded against democracy in Czecho-Slovakia, because "it wanted to see in Prague a totalitarian Communistic government subservient to its will." So Ripka acknowledges that Moscow was dissatisfied with collaborating in the formation of Ripka's "synthesis." Ripka finally discovered that Red Moscow wants its allies to be totally subservient to its dictates. But Ripka came upon this self-evident matter only in 1948, when he was thrown out of the government, or was at least prevented from co-governing in Prague with the Reds, and **after** he fled Czecho-Slovakia. **Before that time, however, Ripka was the man, who — acting like somebody in**

the pay of Moscow — assured the Czechs and the uninformed world that reports about Moscow intervening in the internal affairs of individual states were absolutely false!

Philip Paneth in his book "Edward Beneš, Leader of Democracy," on pgs. 123-124, notes the commentary of Dr. Hubert Ripka on the treaty of December, 1943, which Dr. Beneš concluded with Moscow. **"This Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty,"** said Ripka at that time, **"had as its aim to strengthen the security of Europe."** Ripka rejected the contention that this pact would mean the bolshevization of Europe or Czecho-Slovakia. **"The treaty,"** Ripka stated categorically, **"gives a clear answer to all those who continue to suspect the Soviet Union of the intention of bolshevizing the countries of Central Europe that are its neighbors, nay, of intending even to annex them to the Soviet Union. The treaty gives a clear answer to all who are continuing to present Czecho-Slovakia as a tool in the hands of the Soviets. In the agreement of 1943, the Soviet Union once again binds itself to respect her independence and that it shall not intervene in her internal affairs. Czecho-Slovakia binds itself in a similar fashion. By these formal ties the fact was confirmed again that the Soviet government had no intention of forcing its political regime on other nations and so much the less to annex the nations of Central Europe or any others to the Soviet framework."**

Whence did Dr. Ripka know these things? Was he ignorant of the fates of the Caucasian republics, or the painful fate of the three Baltic states, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia? Since the Soviet government acted imperialistically toward those states, why did Ripka think that the same thing would not also happen in the case of Czecho-Slovakia? But Ripka went much farther. He said that the treaty which Czecho-Slovakia concluded with the Soviet Union not only did not weaken her sovereignty and independence, but, conversely, that basically it strengthened and secured them. As a real progressive, always wanting to instruct and teach other nations, Ripka offered this instruction:

"Not in distrust and in a hostile stand toward the Soviet Union, but in confidence and sincere willingness for a clean, friendly cooperation with the Soviet Union is the re-

liable guarantee for assuring the freedom and independence of every country, namely, the countries of Central and Southeastern Europe. Every nation in this region with which the Soviet Union borders directly can be certain — if it cultivates a friendship with this great power — that it certainly shall get from it help to defend its freedom and independence.”

Note the certainty with which Ripka spoke in 1943 about the future conduct of Moscow toward the states that trust it. What superficiality that was, what irresponsibility, nay, what recklessness of the first degree!

The years have proved that the Slovaks were right when they warned in the Prague Parliament that the union of Czecho-Slovakia with Moscow was “the greatest blunder ever committed by Czecho-Slovak foreign politics.” The blunder of 1935 was duplicated in 1943, and its consequences showed up in July, 1947, in a dramatic way.

On July 7, 1947, the Prague Council of Ministers, whose president was Klement Gottwald, unanimously accepted the invitation to the conference in Paris, where Czecho-Slovakia was to join the Marshall Plan. **Not a single minister voted against it.** On July 9th, Gottwald, Ján Masaryk, and Drtina flew to Moscow. There the representatives of sovereign and independent Republic of Czecho-Slovakia were ordered by Stalin to annul their unanimous decision and tell Paris that the Czecho-Slovak Republic would not join in the Marshall Plan.

Behold the crude Soviet intervention in the internal affairs of a state to which the Soviets had guaranteed sovereignty and independence in two treaties. **And the Czech delegation, of which Gottwald was the only Communist, unanimously accepted Stalin's dictate in Moscow!** Gottwald, just as Masaryk, telephoned several times from Moscow to Prague to have the Council of Ministers convene and unanimously “accept” Stalin's order. **It must be stressed that at this time the Council of Ministers was presided over by Dr. Peter Zenkl, the first Vice-Premier of the government and presently the chairman of the “Council of Free Czecho-slovakia” of Washington, D. C.**

Capitulation!

The small nation of the Finns and Tito did not capitulate before the dictates of Moscow. The Czechs capitulated and they themselves, headed by Beneš, Masaryk, Zenkl and Ripka, voluntarily went over into the Soviet camp. That is their handiwork and, hence, they themselves are responsible for it. And it is their unpardonable sin that into their camp they also dragged the Slovaks who never agreed with the Sovietophile policy of Beneš, Masaryk, Zenkl and Ripka. The Slovaks from the very beginning warned the Czechs that they were on the wrong road when they fraternized with Communistic Moscow. A. J. Jandáček wrote the truth in his booklet "Behind the Iron Curtain" (Chicago, 1948), when he said: **"Everything that happened in Prague in February, 1948, was only the result and climax of all former provisions of the Czech government in London."**

To this I might add, that it was the result of the decisions of not only the London government, but also that government in Prague, which, after 1945, approved all decrees and accepted all legal motions which the Communists placed before it and the Parliament. **Not once did the anti-Communist majority in Parliament reject Communistic bills. Thus, in an altogether legal manner, the ground was prepared for Communism in Czecho-Slovakia. Under those laws, serving only Communism, we find the signatures of Zenkl, Ripka and the rest of the Communist collaborators. All these gentlemen thought that they could flirt with Communism to build in Central Europe some kind of greater Czech power, greater than it really was.**

We saw how without public protest the whole Czech government capitulated to the dictates of Stalin. It reversed itself completely on the Marshall Plan. The government newspapers — which a few days before had praised the Marshall Plan and the advantages of entering into it — now began a heavy bombardment against America and the Marshall Plan.

Now, let us see what was happening in Slovakia at that same time.

Ripka says that President Beneš in the summer of 1947 went to Slovakia for a rest. He went to Topoľčianky which lies some 2 kilometers from the capital city of Slovakia,

Bratislava. At the Topoľčianky castle, for six years (1939-1944), the president of Slovakia, Dr. Joseph Tiso, used to spend his summers. It was the summer home of the same Dr. Tiso who was hanged in Bratislava on April 18, 1947, after Beneš refused to grant clemency. Most decent people thought it was tactless on the part of Beneš to go to Slovakia in 1947. Beneš, it seems, with his presence in sorrowing Slovakia wanted to boast of his triumph over Tiso, just as a year before he had done in Bohemia with the former president of Czecho-Slovakia, Dr. Emíl Hácha.

The Slovaks always like to welcome guests. In Slovakia there is a motto: a guest in the home — God in the home. Well, in the case of Beneš, this motto did not hold. The Slovaks bitterly suffered the presence of Beneš in their land, in their own home. They deluged Beneš with letters, anonymous and signed, in which they called him the heartless murderer of Dr. Tiso and the greatest enemy of the Slovaks, predicting for him a most shameful end within a year. In his memoirs Ripka admits that Beneš did not feel physically well in Slovakia. Within a few days he was threatened with an attack of paralysis (apoplexy). The Slovaks looked upon these reports with satisfaction, seeing in them the finger of God. As soon as Beneš left Slovakia a mass political persecution of Slovak patriots began in that hapless country. The Communists were seeking to gain their ends, while the Czechs, on the other hand, their own aims. But their common goal was: **to master Slovakia and break her resistance.**

Both the Communists and the Beneš Czechs wanted to frighten the Slovaks who had on the whole remained true to the idea of the Slovak State. The Slovaks were forced to live together with the Czechs in a common state against their will from 1945, the State they had parted with on March 14, 1939. It is known that the Communists were more tactful with the Slovak national question. They admitted that a nation that once had its own State would never renounce it wilfully. Ripka recalls correctly that when Beneš returned from Moscow in 1944, he told his intimates in London of the possibility of establishing an independent Slovak

State. That was at a time when Moscow, in the agreement of 1943, solemnly recognized Czecho-Slovakia, respected the integrity of her territory, nay, even recognized Beneš as the "president" of the "new" Czecho-Slovakia. In Moscow, Beneš was given to understand that a Slovak Republic was not only possible, but also quite acceptable to Stalin.

Of course, the Communists at that time (1944) expected the Slovak president, Dr. Joseph Tiso, to go to Moscow, or to send his plenipotentiary, to negotiate the possibility of saving the Slovak Republic under a Communistic disguise. Dr. Tiso, however, refused to go to Moscow, while Beneš and the rulers of Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria did go.

With Dr. Tiso a principle was at stake. With the others only tact. But one cannot make tact out of principle. It never pays. And nothing permanent or valuable can be attained by surrendering principles. It was not only Dr. Tiso, but all the Slovaks loyal to him, who refused to go along with the Slovak Communists or the Communists of Moscow. In the elections of 1946, the Slovaks voted over 70 per cent against Communism and, this, clearly made it known that they did not want to collaborate with Communism under any circumstances. The Slovaks proved in practice their loyalty to the principles expressed by Štúr, Palárik, Štefánik, Hlinka, Tiso and other political representatives of the Slovak nation.

This was a practical demonstration of the high political consciousness of the Slovaks, the basis of which was a clean and practical Christianity. Ripka knows well that the Czechs were not imbued with any such consciousness. **In Bohemia not only Czech workers, but even Czech peasants voted for Communism.** What is more, even Královské Vinohrady, where the wealthiest groups of Czech bourgeoisie resided, voted for Communism. The rich Czechs wanted to save their wealth, their banks and factories, just as Czech workers wanted to save their work and the Czech farmers their lands.

In Slovakia, however, the fight against Communism was waged on an ideological basis of clean national tradition

and of adherence to the Catholic Church. It thus happened that the Communists and Czech centralists had to come to grips with a spiritual power such as Catholicism. Ripka wrote that **"the Communists, favoring Slovak nationalism, were not successful in paralyzing the influence of Slovak Catholicism, which is not only nationalistic, but also passionately anti-Communist."** We might add that even the Czech centralists could not paralyze the influence of Catholicism on public affairs in Slovakia.

At that time, Ripka mentions in his memoirs, he, Zenkl, the Stránskys, father and son, and Drtina came together at Karlsbad. They worked out a plan to have the Slovak Democratic Party — representing over 60 per cent of the anti-Communist voters of Slovakia — "take the initiative to rid itself of 'undesirable' elements in its ranks." The Communists were for the plan 100 per cent; not only with words, but with deeds as well. The Minister of Interior in Bratislava was a certain General Nicholas Ferjenčík, a man without principle and a willing executor of Communistic orders. On October 6, 1947, this Ferjenčík broadcast that his office had uncovered a plot against the Republic and had already arrested 380 young members of the Slovak anti-centralistic and anti-Communistic intelligentsia. He accused them, as Ripka states, "of collaborating with emigrants who were in foreign lands under the leadership of Sidor and Ďurčanský."

Immediately the State representatives at Bratislava demanded the Prague parliament to deprive of immunity two Slovak Catholic gentlemen, deputies and general secretaries of the Slovak Democratic Party, Dr. Miloš Bugár and Dr. Ján Kempný, who were, it was charged, connected with the "plot against the Republic" Ripka himself confirms that this was all a Communist invention. The officials were not concerned with punishing culprits, because there were none. But they did want to terrorize the anti-Communistic elements in Slovakia, which meant practically the whole population of Slovakia.

And, in this case, a shameful thing happened. Within the Slovak Democratic Party and within the Czech Government parties the Red collaborators began their shady work.

They demanded Bugár and Kempný be deprived of immunity. These two deputies, mind you, belonged to the largest anti-Communist party in Slovakia that was represented in the Prague Government by Ján Ursíny, Vice-Premier of the Government, Dr. Ivan Pietor, Minister of Railroads, Dr. N. Franek, Minister of Unification, and Ján Lichner, State Undersecretary in the Ministry of National Defense. **And in 1947 the Prague Parliament had an absolute majority of non-Communist deputies.** Something that should not have happened did happen. The Prague Government decided to surrender both Slovak deputies, and immediately thereafter Parliament deprived both the general secretaries of a Government party in Slovakia of their deputorial immunity. Dr. Bugár and Dr. Kempný had to sit in jail, while Dr. Joseph Lettrich, president of the Democratic Party, kept on sitting in the chairman's seat of the Slovak National Council in Bratislava and the other ministers remained sitting in their ministerial chairs in Prague.

In the history of parliamentarism this is probably the only case of its kind. It was possible only because none of the people in the Government of Prague and Bratislava had enough courage and personal integrity to fight the Communists. All the Slovak and Czech people in Government were willing to make any and all compromises, treaties and concessions, as long as they could pay for them with the freedom and suffering of others. The case of Bugár and Kempný presented the occasion to begin a great offensive against the extortions of the Communists in the Czecho-Slovak Republic. The Slovaks, as one man, took the lead, in this battle, because here the principle of freedom was at stake and the freedom of two of their sons was threatened. But they were hopelessly overpowered by the Reds and the Beneš Czechs.

True it is that Beneš, Ripka and others of their kind were of the opinion that only the western powers were supposed to oppose the Communists and to stem the tide of Communism. Beneš, Ripka, and others of their political entourage, thought that their yielding, duplicity, nay, even their hostility toward their two co-workers, Dr. Bugár and Dr. Kempný, was appealing to the Soviets. And such was

the case. A great opportunity to show up the Reds was lost in the case of Bugár and Kempný. It meant that the first fight on internal policy was lost, and that only shortly after Prague also lost its first battle on foreign policy by obeying Stalin and refusing to join in the Marshall Plan.

Let us not forget that all this was done with the assent of Dr. Beneš. Even here he had his own "plan," and according to it he directed especially the Czech National Socialists.

We must remember that Dr. Beneš was a deputy and vice-president of the Czech National Socialist Party from 1920 to 1935, and that he financed it generously out of the State treasury. Beneš needed that party as a means to gain his ends. He wanted first of all the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then, after T. G. Masaryk, the office of president. Then, when he noticed that the party hindered him in attaining his ends, he easily renounced it. And so it was that in 1926 the party of the Czech National Socialists went into opposition to the Government and its deputy, Dr. Edward Beneš, was supposed to follow it. But he preferred to resign his mandate of deputy so that he could remain in the government as an "impartial" (non-political) Minister of Foreign Affairs. Nevertheless, the Czech National Socialists always regarded Beneš as their man — their leader.

Little wonder, then, that the Czech National Socialist ministers went to President Beneš for advice during the crisis that broke out in the Government between the Communists and the non-Communists in 1948. Without Beneš's assent nothing was undertaken, and Beneš assured his followers that he was backing them, that he would not desert them as he did in 1926. That was supposed to mean that he would not use them as tools to hold his position, but that he would stay with them to the end in the fight against the Communists in government, against Gottwald's faction.

In the meantime the Communists sought to strengthen their positions, **the key positions in the government which Beneš had given them.** In 1947 the Communists held these positions in the Prague Government: **Klement Gottwald, Premier; Viliam Široký, Vice-Premier; Václav Nosek, Min-**

ister of Interior; **Jaromil Dolánsky**, Minister of Finance; **Václav Kopecký**, Minister of Information; **Anton Zmrhal**, Minister of Internal Commerce; **Zdenek Nejedlý**, Minister of Labor and Social Welfare; **Julius Ďuriš**, Minister of Agriculture; **Vlado Clementis**, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All these Communist ministers did what was in the interest of their Party. And this job they did loyally and thoroughly.

The Minister of the Interior, Nosek, purged the leadership of the Department of National Security in Bohemia of all non-Communist elements. He had eight regional commanders of the police transferred and filled their places with eight reliable Communists. The non-Communist ministers had a pretext to attack. This was one of the most foolish quarrels that ever took place. But President Beneš approved it and was happy that the Communists occasioned it. The time to stir up the masses in Slovakia and the whole Republic, as well as for rousing the sincere anger of the people, was when the Communists demanded the arrest of the two Slovak deputies, Dr. Bugár and Dr. Kempný. But this opportunity was not used by Beneš and his followers. Why should it be? Nothing but the freedom and the lives of two Slovak Catholic deputies was at stake! Beneš, Ripka, Zenkl and company figured that they could better move the masses by starting a fight over such a great affair as Nosek transferring eight policemen in Prague and supplanting them with eight others. The police affair could not enthuse the Slovaks and much less the Czechs, who never were fighters. Besides the Czechs are educated by their witty journalist P. Havlíček to hate and ridicule the police. But Beneš, Zenkl, Ripka and others, who did not go among the people, but made politics in offices and editorial rooms, wanted to rescue eight policemen on account of whom a "grave governmental crisis" was initiated.

On February 13, 1948, Zenkl and other non-Communist ministers demanded that Nosek rescind his order. The Communists answered that the matter belonged to the Ministry of Interior, and Nosek would rescind nothing. Every minister performs his office and does things as he nows best. The

government can call a minister to answer for his office, but in this case Premier Gottwald would not do that. Gottwald agreed completely with Nosek and would not disavow anything the Minister of the Interior had approved. The non-Communist ministers considered for a few days whether they should or should not resign. They told Nosek that they would not attend any meetings of the Government or the National Front as long as Nosek would not rescind his order. On February 18th, Ripka and Zenkl again hurried to President Beneš, who approved of their tactics and encouraged them to persevere. He advised them to resign and so force the Communists to yield. Again and again he assured them that he would stand by them "no matter what happens!"

Finally, on February 20, 1948, three parties — the Czech National Socialists, Šrámek's Czech People's Party, and the Slovak Democrats — recalled their ministers from the Government. Before resigning, Zenkl, as chairman of the National Socialist Party, telephoned President Beneš and — as Ripka himself tells it — Beneš said over the telephone: "Finally! And now be careful! No false moves!"

Beneš also personally assured the resigning ministers that they acted correctly when they resigned. He stated emphatically that he would not accept their resignations and so force the Communists to yield. If there was any one who did not believe in the strength and personal honesty of Beneš, that person was the leader of the Czech Populists, Msgr. Šrámek. A. J. Jandáček in his booklet "Behind the Iron Curtain" writes (pg. 29):

"Very few people, however, knew President Beneš as well as Msgr. Šrámek did. He knew how Beneš conducted himself during the Munich crisis and knew some of his irresolute and overly philosophic views. That is why he expressed the fear at the time: whether too much responsibility was not being placed on the President, whether it was wise to put all the burden on the shoulders of one man. In his judgment Šrámek went so far as to express a grave fear whether the President — with regard to his health — would not actually disappoint in this decisive moment and

whether his nerves would last to oppose the hard and well considered plans of the Communists. Dr. Peter Zenkl, however, was so satisfied with the president's conduct that he dispelled Šrámek's fears at least partially."

In a word, it was known that Beneš could not withstand the ordeal, as he could not even in 1938 in Munich. It was known that Beneš's assurances had to be taken with great reserve — on the basis of past experiences. But why, then, did the twelve ministers hand in their resignations, when Beneš was not supposed to accept them and when with their resignation he was supposed to perform some sort of magic before the eyes of the Communists? Such utter silliness was supposed to frighten the Communists and make them concede, when they had the masses on the move and headed in one direction in the Prague "of Beneš" — the Prague that was all Sokol and true to democracy?!

The Communists used State funds to call a rally of workers and farmers from the whole Republic to Prague. They commanded the streets of Prague. They already had the police safely in their hands since 1945, and General Ludvík Šťavinský, whom Beneš named Minister of National Defense, promised to have the entire army ready if Gottwald should need it. Into the situation, directly from Moscow, flew Valerian Alexandrovič Zorin, Soviet deputy minister of Foreign Affairs and former Soviet ambassador in Košice and, then, in Prague.

Against these enthusiastic Communist masses that filled the streets of Prague and against Zorin, who represented the whole diplomatic and military might of the Soviet Union, Dr. Edward Beneš stood alone. Behind him were the twelve ministers shaking with fear — the ministers who really did not want to resign, but wanted to stay on as ministers and in the Government, that is to say, to co-govern with the Communists. That really was a scene for a puppet theatre! Šrámek, as a good soothsayer, kept on cautioning that Beneš would not hold up, that Beneš was capitulating even as he had capitulated in the fall of 1938 to Adolph Hitler.

And so it happened. Gottwald and Nosek visited Beneš two or three times to talk things over. These were in-

teresting conversations. "The president," writes A. J. Jandáček, "ordered listening devices be placed in the room in which Beneš conferred with the Communists. President Beneš at that moment did not know that all his conversations and telephone calls were followed and heard by a system which already was rigged up by the Communist police without Beneš's knowledge."

Both negotiating parties tried to beat each other in being crafty. But the Communists were always a step ahead of Beneš. After Gottwald and Nosek left Beneš, he was visited by two National Socialist ministers, Ripka and Stránský. This was Beneš's last conversation with these two ministers. Ripka noted the following as coming out of that conversation:

Beneš began the conversation with an energetic cry: **"I shall not give in! I said openly and clearly to Gottwald: 'You are preparing to overthrow the State, for a putsch, but I shall not let myself be terrorized by you!'"** And then Beneš told them the contents of his talk with Premier Gottwald. I (Ripka) told him without mincing words: **"That which you are preparing is another Munich."**

The President's face grew serious. He said to us: **"You know the Communists. You know that they do not hesitate to use any means to realize their plans. We must be prepared for anything."**

There were reports, which I personally did not believe, that is that Russia was going to attack us. I told the President that I thought Russia would be satisfied to extend political help to our Communists, but that — with regard to the international complications that might result — Russia would not decide on a single military intervention.

The president listened with great attention. Then he said to me literally: **"I agree with you. I also think that way; Moscow will not take a risk that would mean military intervention. Nevertheless, I cannot exclude the possibility that the Soviet army would cross our borders and then what would we do?"**

"What would we do?" — repeated the president, looking at me and then at Stránsky, "Yes, what would you do?"

I answered that in such a case we would be occupied and defeated. But the nation and the whole world would see that we succumbed to violence. It would be known that the Communist regime was forced upon us, that Czecho-Slovakia was a victim of an attack, against which she could not defend herself. This defeat would carry us to a new victory.

A moment of silence intervened. Then the president began to say: "Maybe," — he said — "but that is not certain. Nobody will help us. Moscow knows that."

Then with growing feeling, raising his voice, Beneš said: "I know them well, those people from Moscow. I had a chance to know them more intimately than you have known them. You overrate their intelligence and their foresight. Even I committed the same mistake. They do not understand the other states at all. They think they are realists. But, in fact, they are only fanatics. Their whole policy is nothing else but one of provoking war. But with them everything will end up as it did with Hitler."

Stránsky who never heard the president speak so, cried out: "And you tell us that? You who have done more than anybody else on earth to bring about collaboration with Soviet Russia?"

Beneš smiled sadly and said: **"I repeat what I have already told you: I shall not yield! You may rest assured on that!"**

With that sentence our last conversation with president Beneš ended. None of us at that moment could know that we shall never again see him.

So wrote Ripka about his last conversation with Beneš.

The conversation tells us that Beneš knew the Soviet factors in Moscow and knew them for a long time. And, yet, he continually and without end recommended to Roosevelt and Churchill to collaborate with them. He demanded that the West believe Stalin. Beneš dressed up the lies of Soviet

propaganda in a garb of truth and thus presented them to the uninformed West. That is how Beneš sinned against the whole Christian world. He did not go unrewarded. He had to stand alone and face to face with the Soviet danger knowing that "nobody will help us — Moscow knows that."

Despite all his assurances that he would not submit, that he knew the Communists well, Beneš, nevertheless, did give in to the Communists. He capitulated to Clement Gottwald. He accepted the resignations of the 12 non-Communist ministers and named the Government that Gottwald dictated!

And what happened with the 12 ministers who resigned? Especially what happened with the four ministers who belonged to the Czech National Socialist Party of Dr. Edward Beneš?

On May 6, 1948, deputies Dr. Ducháček, Dr. Krajina, Dr. Stránský, Vilím and Firt collaborated in preparing a report on the Alsace House in Frankfurt. This is what it says literally:

"On the afternoon of February 28, 1948, the National Socialist ministers assembled in the residence of Dr. Stránský. During this meeting they telephoned Dr. Jina, political adviser of President Beneš, and asked him whether the President would receive them, as is the custom when ministers resign. Dr. Jina answered that the President will not receive them and he repeated this statement when Dr. Ripka asked again. Dr. Ripka then said to Jina: "Tell Mr. President for us that he would not confer with the four ministers who during the whole period stood uncompromisingly behind his program with him in full agreement. We want Dr. Beneš to know just how the people who collaborated so closely with him feel about his not giving them an audience to explain his stand."

Beneš had first encouraged the ministers to resign, then he assured them of his loyalty and perseverance, and, in the end, without their knowledge of it, had decided to accept their resignations. Then Beneš did not even want to talk with them in parting. To keep the presidency Beneš no longer needed the Czech National Socialist Party nor its

four ministers. Now he needed only the Communists, because at the moment they were stronger and in power.

On February 27th Beneš received the whole Gottwald government. Gottwald said his speech, presented his ministers to Beneš, and Beneš replied to Gottwald's speech. By doing so, Beneš accorded the recognition of legality to the Communist ministers for all their future orders.

After Munich Beneš proclaimed that he had a "plan." That was the plan by which he fled from Czecho-Slovakia. After capitulating to Gottwald — the capitulation that Beneš himself called a "second Munich" — Beneš burst into tears and said to editor Jandáček, according to Jandáček: "Tell all the people who love democracy to work in its interest and to try to validate its principles everywhere, and that even there, where they were for a time outraged."

But did not Beneš disgrace them? Did he have to approve the Communistic system? Were only others supposed to work and fight for democracy, while Beneš and his people were entitled to reap its advantages and enjoy its privileges? After this second capitulation Beneš did not have an aeroplane. He could not fly abroad. He had only an automobile. In it he left for his private residence in Sezimova Usti. He left, but only after he had legalized everything that the Communists did and what they were still to do with the people of Czecho-Slovakia. Beneš, "the great democrat and builder," had done all that for the Communists!

At the end of his memoirs Ripka displayed the pinnacle of his cynicism. He whitewashed the Beneš Czechs. They could not prevent the second Munich, even with weapons, he says, because the Soviet army would probably walk in and subject the Czechs to untold brutalities.

"After the occupation of our country by the Soviet army in 1945," Ripka writes cynically, "we knew well what the Soviet army was capable of!" (Il Popolo, Rome, May 15, 1949).

Whether Ripka was in London or in Prague, until February 1948, he always spoke and wrote about the "liberation" of Czecho-Slovakia and the victorious Soviet army.

The Czechs actually welcomed that army enthusiastically. While Beneš and the Czechs kept talking about "liberation" from 1945 to 1948, we Slovaks, on the other hand, claimed that Slovakia was occupied, that the Slovak State was suppressed by force and that the Soviet soldiers in 1944-1945 committed the most terrible bestialities against unarmed Slovak men and women.

Even Czech emigrants told me to my face that Slovakia was "liberated" in 1945. But today, even Ripka confesses, rather belatedly, that his Bohemia, too, was occupied by Red Moscow already in 1945! That really is unmitigated cynicism, coming as it does from a person who played "independent minister" from 1945 to 1948 in his occupied country and then, leaving the country, would again — with some other kind of army of "liberation" — save not only his own country, but also our beaten and crucified Slovakia.

We began our remarks to Ripka's memoirs by citing the argument of Robert Ingrim about the possibility of the existence of a secret agreement between Beneš, Ripka, Zenkl and Gottwald. Now we read in the newspaper of the Czech National Socialist deputy Francis Klatil ("ČAS," London, The Warwick Printing Co., issue No. 1, 1949) a note from the pen of Dr. Edward Beneš about the conference with Gottwald on May 14, 1948. In it Beneš carries on a long dialogue with Gottwald about wanting to resign from the presidency. Let us quote at least a few sentences from it:

"The president does not want to tell the Communists to do things differently, since he does not want to hinder them. That is why he repeats to the Premier of the Government not to look for any foreign influences in his action. It is only and only his personal decision. . . . The president again emphasizes that (in Sezimovo Usti) he did not receive anybody, neither did he ask anybody for any explanations or to let him know his stand. Everything is exclusively his own. . . . Therefore he is giving the Communist Party freedom of action to arrange things to suit its needs. The President further states that he is talking with the Prime Minister of the government with complete sincerity

and conviction and he is asking him to judge what he is saying from that standpoint. He does not quarrel, nor in the end, does he want to part with the Prime Minister of the Government in a quarrel. . . . He does not want the Communists to have any quarrels with the President, nor the President to quarrel with the Communists, because it would be possible to abuse this. The State is so dear to the President, that he will do nothing that might harm it. . . . Prime Minister Gottwald at first replied in general terms to the President's explanation and his intention of abdicating. He says that the Communists would prefer not to have to discuss the question of the departure of the President. He knows what motives the President has, he respects them and thinks that if it is already necessary to part, that they would want to part as friends. **The President answers, that he wishes the same. He said that to Smutný and hopes that they shall part as friends. He reminded even Dr. Clementis that he, Beneš, will not undertake any action against his own State, that he will not go against the Communists and he shall not undertake any act that would be directed against the Soviet Union."**

That, then, is how Beneš spoke to Gottwald in Sezimovo Usti. He assured him he would do nothing against the Communists or the Soviet Union. He expressed a sincere desire to part with Gottwald and the Communists in Government as a friend. He wanted to retire and hand over everything to Gottwald and his Czech Reds peacefully. And he did eventually. Gottwald then saw to it that Dr. Edward Beneš got full pay "for life," too.

Does the international anti-Communist public think that the same principles do not hold for Beneš's close collaborators — for Ripka, Zenkl, and for the many other Czechs, who fled Czechoslovakia after February 1948? We must be on our guard. The legends of "liberation" and "liberators" from 1948 to 1945 are well known to us and must ever be a warning not only for us Slovaks, but also for the whole civilized Christian world.

CASTLES OF SLOVAKIA

B E C K O V

Beckov — probably called “Bludinec” originally — belongs to the group of the oldest citadels or castles of the Váh region which were situated for the most part on the left bank of the Váh river. Beneath Beckov there was an old military and commercial road, which deviated from the main Czech highway near Jablonica and extended through Brezová to the Váh region. According to tradition, the Beckov Castle already existed during the time of the Great Moravian Empire, so that the legend about its originating during the time of Ctibor (about 1412) probably has no historical basis.

Beckov is mentioned in documents already in 1208 under the name of “Blundix.” In describing Skalka, the documents tell us of a road “coming from Beckov.” The bishop of Nitra (about 1228), we learn, donated a fourth of the wine he had received as a tithe from Beckov to the monastery on Skalka. That means that in those days the vicinity of Beckov was interested in growing grapes. In the 13th century, Anonymous (“*Belae regis notarius*”) called Beckov “*Castrum Blundus*” (Bolondoc), and Béla I. himself called it “*Bolonduch*.” The Beckov fortress was at first a royal military station and, later, beneath the castle there originated the settlement of Beckov, which was once surrounded by fortifications.

Matthew Čák of Trenčín, “the Lord of the Váh and the Tatras,” ruled over Beckov at one time. After him to Beckov came the royal solicitor, which means that during the rule of King Robert and King Louis I, Beckov was in the hands of the king. When Zigmund of Luxemburg sought men in Poland in 1386 to fight his rival, Charles of Durazza, he was escorted on this trip by four soldiers from Slovakia, one of whom, Ctibor (“*Tiburtius*” in Latin), received extensive lands from Zigmund for faithful services rendered. This Ctibor was generally known as the Lord of the Váh river (“*dominus fluvii Vagi*”), even though he also was

the administrator of Bratislava (Pressburg) and, later, the Duke of Transylvania. At that time Zigmund and his wife donated even Beckov to Ctibor and this gift is confirmed by a special document, dated in Trenčín in 1396.

Ctibor rebuilt and renovated the castle for his own use and then donated Podhrad to his old castellan James from Nasilov. Ctibor founded the preposture in Nové Mesto (nad Váhom) and participated in the Council of Kostnica (1414-1418). Duke Ctibor, Lord of Trenčín, Hlohovec and many other castles, died in 1424 after he was stung by a bee. His oldest son, Ctibor II, became Bishop of Jäger and Ctibor III inherited his father's properties and led his people in the fights against the Hussites. Ten years after his father's death, Ctibor III also passed away and the family's vast holdings, excepting Beckov, were taken over by the royal solicitor. Beckov came into the hands of the Bánffy family from Dolná Lindava; the last descendant of this clan, John Bánffy died fighting the Turks in 1595. While the Bánffy family ruled over Beckov, the preacher Bornemissa visited them and wrote his collection of sermons, known as "Postla," which was published in 1584 and thus prepared the way for the Reformation.

When the Turks attacked Piešťany in 1599, they took with them 13,000 captives from that part of the country and plundered and pillaged the entire vicinity up to Trenčín. History notes, however, that the people who sought refuge in the Beckov Castle were spared, even though the Turks had come under the very fortifications of the castle. Imrich Thököly used Beckov as a prison for his captives after his Moravian expedition (Uherský Brod).

But how did Beckov fall into ruins? Some say that the castle was razed during the reign of Leopold I, while others say something else. Nevertheless, it is quite certain that the great conflagration which devoured the community of Beckov in 1729, also completely ruined the castle.

The legend about the origin of the castle, which the Slovaks of Beckov love to tell, relates that Ctibor built the castle to fulfill his promise to his clown Becko. Ctibor, the legend says, was a passionate hunter. One evening, after

a successful day of hunting, Ctibor and his group made camp near the high limestone rock upon which the ruins of Beckov rest today. Ctibor was in a jovial mood. After eating heartily, the group burst out in song; some members of the party recounted tales of heroism, witches and goblins; others told jokes. But no one could tell a tale or a joke like Becko, Ctibor's court jester. Becko had Ctibor and his entourage in stitches. After the clown had related his last "just one more" tall tale, Ctibor said to him:

"Becko, my fool, well done. Demand of me what you will and I, if your wish is at all humanly attainable, shall grant it."

Becko, seated atop a huge black bear the party had bagged that day, grinned, fixed his eyes on the rock above and said: "Look, if you are such a famous man, build me, if you please, a castle upon that rock!"

The crowd roared with laughter, because every one thought that impossible. But Ctibor looked up at the rock, rubbed his whiskers, smiled and replied: "You shall have it!"

The legend continues that Ctibor did fulfill his promise. A few days later he had his people start work on the new castle. We are told that Ctibor ordered his men to stop all travelers along the road beneath the site of the castle and put them to work for eight days. In a year the castle was built and Ctibor and his people celebrated the accomplishment. The new castle was beautiful beyond comparison. Ctibor named it Beckov in honor of his clown Becko. But Ctibor did not give it to Becko. According to the legend, Ctibor liked the castle so much that he moved into it himself and gave Becko one of his other castles.

The great Slovak patriot, writer and publisher, Joseph Miloslav Hurban, was born in the village of Beckov, March 19, 1817. He was one of the leaders of the Slovak rebellion against the Habsburgs in 1848-49; with Louis Štúr and Michael Hodža, he led the revolt for equal rights for the Slovak nation. Hurban and Hodža joined with Štúr to establish the literary Slovak that is used today by Slovaks everywhere.

DR. JOSEPH LETTRICH

was head man in Slovakia from 1945 to 1948. The Slovak National Council, which he was chairman of, was absolute in all matters pertaining to Slovakia. He was a member of the Communist-dominated "National Front" Government of Prague until February 1948. Today he is Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of the "Council of Free Czechoslovakia" (Washington, D. C.), which is headed by former Czech "National Fronters" who collaborated with the Communists in the Prague Government before the so-called Communist "putsch" of February 1948. Lettrich, the man who helped to destroy his own country, the independent Republic of Slovakia, suddenly became a "democratic, anti-Communist exile from Czecho-Slovakia" — as did many of the other members of the Council — after that "putsch." What kind of a "democrat" and "anti-Communist" Lettrich actually was is reflected by the following quotations from his articles and speeches:

"We cannot stress the fact often enough that without the help of the Soviet Army we would not have been able to meet here today. We shall never forget the sacrifices and efforts made by the Soviet Union for the cause of political freedom. This should be explained to the youngest people of our generation. The Slovak nation and the Czechoslovak Republic are morally bound to the Soviet Union by very strong ties." — (ČAS, Bratislava, June 5, 1945.

• • •
"Political parties which have outlived themselves, which are politically unacceptable or guilty, may not be revived in our country, nor renewed in any form. . . The Democratic Party, together with the Communist Party in Slovakia, have created a well-coordinated working body, hitherto unknown, which bore witness and proved in all fields of endeavor that they were united in a common purpose and by common interests that they had been faced by a common enemy and by the same perils. Today they are united anew in a common endeavor to rebuild our nation. It is the firm conviction of all political leaders in the Democratic Party that this bond of collaboration shall be further strengthened." — (Before the Provisional National Assembly, Prague, October 30, 1945).

• • •
"Generalissimo Stalin is the leader of the great Soviet Union, our good ally and friend, whose Red Army fought so heroically against Nazism and brought freedom even to us." — (NÁRODNÁ OBRODA, January 26, 1947).

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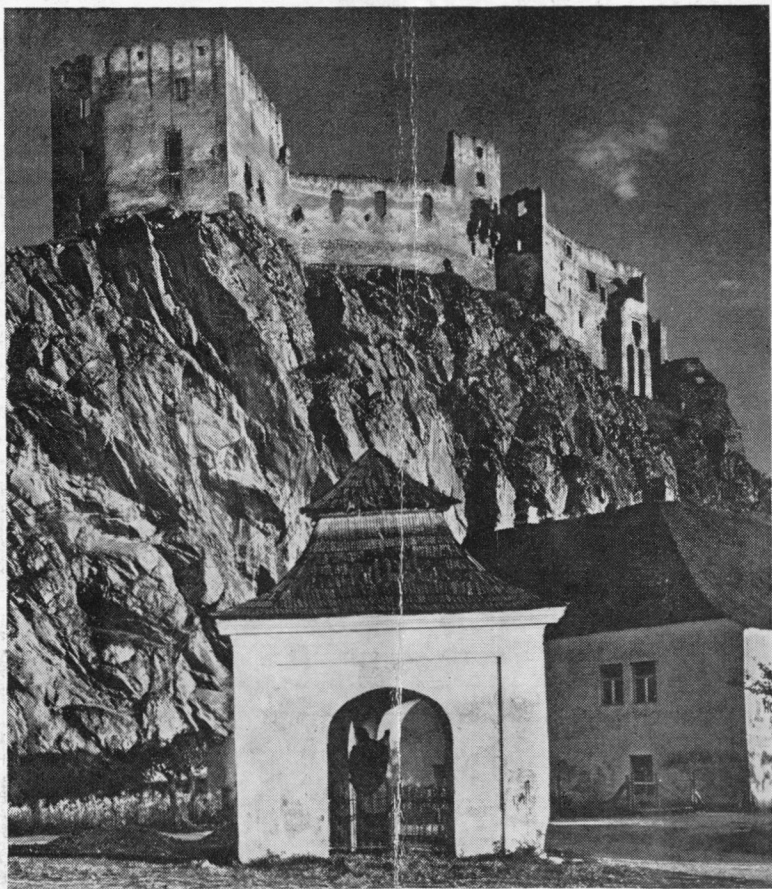
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